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OCTOBER 1955 VOL. V, NO. 4

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* IRVING KRISTOL

This Month's *Encounter* 2

THE DARK EYE IN AFRICA — *Laurens van der Post* 5

WAR GAMES — *Claud Cockburn* 13

HER DOMINION (POEM) — *Sydney Goodsir Smith* 23

PHILOSOPHY AT ABSOLUTE ZERO — *A. J. Ayer* 24

RUSSIA IN FLUX

1. THE "THAW" AND AFTER — *Walter Z. Laqueur* 34
2. PEACE AND MR. KRUSHCHEV — *Richard Lowenthal* 42

THE PORNOGRAPHY OF DEATH — *Geoffrey Gorer* 49

THE FUTURE OF ATOMIC ENERGY — *Sir John Cockcroft* 53

Table Talk — *Irving Kristol* 60

Letter from Burma

PAGODAS AND ROLLING MILLS — *Herbert Passin* 62

Art

ANDRÉ DERAIN: ART AS FATE — *Denys Sutton* 68

Comment

Margaret Rawlings, Hilary Corke, Ronald Vincent Smith
William Phillips 73

Books

BURKE IN AMERICA — *Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.* 76

HITLER LEADS TO HIROSHIMA — *Christopher Sykes* 80

PAST AND PRESENT TENSE — *T. R. Fyvel* 83

BAD CONSCIENCE — *Hilary Corke* 85

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This Month's *ENCOUNTER*:—

WE HAVE a philosopher-friend, a German who emigrated to Canada, who made what we have always valued as a very trenchant observation. "On the Continent," he said, "politics is regarded by the intellectual class as a branch of metaphysics. In the English-speaking world, on the other hand, it is looked upon as a branch of ethics." We were reminded of this remark when we first read A. J. Ayer's essay on nihilism. Professor Ayer examines, with his usual lucidity and rigour, a school of thought that has had, in such diverse countries as Russia, Germany, and France, the most pernicious consequences. His essay, with its passionate attachment to the common weal and its stubborn refusal to be enchanted by frenzied phantoms, could only have been written in English, just as the writers he discusses could *never* have written in English.

Nihilism is certainly a symptom, not a solution; but symptoms are not unimportant, and some have been known to be fatal. Once the philosophy of nihilism is disposed of, there yet remains the fact—that is to say, the absence of any accepted set of transcendental values, religious or secular, which may be said to define the purpose of life in Western civilisation. When one reads Laurens van der Post's moving essay on Africa, one sees how significant this absence can be. The Africans need our technology, our science, our habits of enterprise. But above all they need—and demand—a philosophy of life to replace the primitive world-outlook they are surrendering; and before this demand we are struck dumb. A century ago, we tried to offer them Christianity, at a time when we had ourselves ceased to believe in it. Now—we offer them nothing. Is that not a form of nihilism in practice?

WE PUBLISH in this issue, under the general title "Russia in Flux," two articles by Walter Laqueur and Richard Lowenthal, which survey and analyse recent trends in Soviet culture and Soviet foreign policy. We have chosen the title deliberately. As some of our readers will doubtless recall, it was under this same title that Sir John Maynard published his monumental, and on the whole optimistic, book *fourteen* years ago. The point is quite simple: one tends to think of Soviet Russia either as a frozen monolith or as a Purposive Society, whereas it—no less than the nations of the West—has merely been in a state of flux these past decades. This flux has not been a dialectical movement of the Spirit of History. Nor has it been an ingeniously planned series of transformations and metamorphoses. Soviet Russia has a history; is *in* history, not above it. And like all ruling groups in history, and unlike the omniscient columnists, the Russian rulers have no privileged insight into the ultimate meaning and consequences of their own actions. It is possible that they did not intend to do all the evil they did; it is also possible that they may find they cannot do all the good they want, for having done that evil.

There is a special temptation to wishful thinking where the Soviet Union is concerned. The ideals of its founders were so noble, the deeds of its rulers so base, that one would be less than human if there did not survive the hope that, out of so much suffering, some of the original purity would emerge. Perhaps it will; but that is a question of fact, not of metaphysics, and at the moment the facts do not speak unambiguously. There has certainly been a noticeable improvement in the lives and liberties of the Soviet citizen since the death of Stalin. On the other hand, the general situation is not significantly better than it was, say, in 1939. And there is still a considerable distance to go before it can stand comparison with 1933. It may be that the post-Stalin era does represent a genuine turn for the better in Soviet history, and one would have to be a bigoted fanatic not to watch events prayerfully. But it is one thing

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to wish for good tidings, and another to wishfully think them into existence.

As a majestic specimen of such wishful thinking—and as an amusing instance of the rhetoric of a certain kind of journalism—we offer a paragraph that was published in the *New Statesman and Nation* not long ago. It appeared in Mr. Kingsley Martin's "Moscow Diary," and reads as follows:

> Marshal Bulganin, whom Londoners will have a chance of welcoming next spring, was recently introduced in Moscow to some foreign visitors. He expressed, I'm told, the hope that they would visit some distant parts of the Soviet Union. They replied that they had been refused permission to visit places in Asiatic Russia they had always wished to see. Bulganin turned angrily to colleagues near him and said, "When are you going to stop this silly nonsense?" This story, *whether precisely true or not*, is illuminating.

The italics are ours, of course.

NOTES ON OTHER CONTRIBUTORS:—

RICHARD LOWENTHAL is on the staff of the *Observer*. . . . WALTER Z. LAQUEUR has just completed a history of Communism in the Middle East, and is now working on a study of Soviet Russia's relations with Asia. . . . LAURENS VAN DER POST'S article is extracted from a book which will be published in the near future by the Hogarth Press. . . . CLAUD COCKBURN, after one of the most colourful careers in modern British journalism, now lives quietly in Ireland, where he is writing his autobiography. . . . GEOFFREY GORER'S book, *Exploring English Character*, was reviewed in last month's ENCOUNTER. . . . SIR JOHN COCKCROFT is Director of the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell. . . . HERBERT PASSIN is an American sociologist who has been living in Japan for the past eight years. . . . DENYS SUTTON has published several books on various aspects of 18th and 20th century painting. . . . ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR. is Professor of History at Harvard University.

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Laurens van der Post

The Dark Eye in Africa

I BEGIN with Africa in the physical sense: I begin with the earth of Africa. Now Africa is old in the longest measure of time on earth. It is old in a way which makes the lovely white mountains in Switzerland not solid immovable matter, but waves curling and breaking in the storm of time; it makes even Everest but the ghostly spume of spray torn by an angry gust from curling breakers. Long before vegetable, organic, or biological matter was in being, the rocks and earth of Africa as we know them today were already formed. Indeed those of us who are born in Africa are born with a sense of this old oldness deep within us. For Africa was once part of a vast land-continent to which geologists, with a touch of whimsicality unusual to their sober and austere kind, have given the name of Gondwana-land, a name which has an odd gone-with-the-wind nostalgia implicit in its sound. So vast was this continent that it included part of Brazil, the Deccan, Madagascar, and Australia. When I first went to Australia, although at the time I did not know this geological fact, my senses told me at once that here, beyond rational explanation, was a land physically akin to Africa.

In those far remote days Africa was separated from Europe by the great sea of Tethys, but as this sea shrank and life appeared on the newly formed coasts, as the seaboards gradually linked up into the pattern of earth that we know today and created everywhere opportunities of vast interchanges of life and emerging cultures, Africa was enabled by a miraculous design of nature to be an exception to the general. When her coastline gave way, no matter how the sea nibbled at it, it kept its defences intact and retreated in good Macedonian order. To this day the coastline of Africa not only offers no convenient natural harbours but most of it, together with the interior, is raised above the water level and the rivers come tumbling out of it in swift, churning, angry torrents that make navigation up these streams impossible. Where the earth was not so raised this ancient land threw up vast seas of desert which could be crossed only by a few initiates at their peril. Also, as if to make quite sure that her defences completely sealed Africa off from the outer world, Nature developed the most redoubtable champions in the mosquito and tsetse fly and other minute parasites, all able to strike down any invader with a wonderful selection of deadly diseases, from sleeping sickness, malaria, dysentery and typhoid, to leprosy and bubonic plague. One day I hope to persuade my fellow Africans to put up a monument to the despised mosquito and tsetse fly for so well discharging this task of defending Africa against invasion.

So in this way Africa was enabled, undisturbed, to develop its own forms of life and its own nature on an infinitely richer and more varied scale than any other continent. Even today there are large sections of Africa which are as they have always been, immense tracts whose people still observe their tradi-

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tional ways in another and more ancient dimension of time. There are still primeval territories, scenes of unexploited mountain and lake, river, plain and forest, and patterns of vivid animal life that you see nowhere else in the world. For instance, there are more than one hundred and thirty kinds of lovely, bounding antelope in Africa which are unknown anywhere else in the world. No country ever had such varieties of life, from the most minute viruses and microbes, insects, reptiles, and animals to its human beings. Wherever the invader tried to attack Africa he found it filled to the brim with a vivid, flame-flickering, dancing life of its own, ranging in size from the mosquito to the elephant. When three hundred years ago my ancestors landed at the southern extremity of Africa there were not merely prancing bushmen and slant-eyed Hottentots to greet them but also hippopotamuses with the same portly shape and air as those Lord Mayors who carry the gold chains of office on their stomachs, kingly lions, royal leopards, rhinoceroses as irritable as peppery generals whose livers have been ruined by whisky and curry in the tropics, and wise old elephants as elder statesmen, wading into the breakers to look the new-arrivals over.

Nor was this fullness, richness, and variety of life confined merely to the animals. Inside the defences of this redoubtable African fortress of original life, man lived and developed an extraordinarily varied and vivid being of his own. There was the pygmy bushman, the little yellow man with his Mongolian eye and enlarged posterior, who neither husbands animals nor cultivates the land but trusts himself to nature and the rhythm of the seasons like fish to the sea, and who feels far more secure in this natural environment than ever he does in the one that "superior" man presumed to give him. There was the Hottentot, taller, and possessing a secret eye, who was more "advanced" in our understanding of the word in that he owned dogs and hump-backed cattle and walked slowly behind his fat nomadic herds, his skin shining like newly strung telephone wires in the sun. Then in the east there was the Bantu with his heavy slow-stepping grace, and in the west the negro with his baroque sense of fate, and numbers of other sub-divisions and colourful Nilotic and Hamitic variants. Contrast those with Australia's one aboriginal race, and do you wonder that I call this development miraculous?

So for thousands and thousands of years this rich life was truly contained and nourished by Africa on African soil and uniquely in the African way. I know of no other life which has possessed for so long this seclusion and continuity, this privileged isolation from foreign influence and greed. It seems to me that Africa gives the most dramatic example of life developing from an invisible point in Time where, as Euclid might have put it, history had as yet no size or magnitude but only position, right on into our own age, always following a development which was not according to man's idea of life so much as according to life's own plan for itself. This picture is vanishing fast; but it is still valid in large tracts of the great continent. The bushman is still living in the Kalahari desert just as he did in the beginning of time. I have recently been there and I have seen him in his natural and innocent society, still using his love-making ritual, the cupid's bow, which hitherto for me had been little more than an image on a Greek vase. I have also been in sleeping sickness country just below the great escarpments of Abyssinia and seen black people of superb physique, garlands of wild flowers round their necks, marching towards me unexpectedly out of the singing grass and playing on pipes exactly like the Pipes of Pan which, too, I had only known from Greek vases. There is enough of this life still left in Africa to show us what it was like before we came on the scene.

As I have said, my own ancestors were among the first successfully to land at the Southern Cape of Africa three centuries ago, but the natural defences of greater Africa did not seriously begin to give way to outside invasion until about a hundred years ago, and only finally crumbled during the nineties of the last

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century. When that happened the white man could not have been less prepared for what he was about to find. A long period of pure reason which had begun with the Reformation and been stimulated by the French Revolution was deep at work in his spirit, setting him at variance with his intuitions and instincts. The materialism of the industrial revolution already dominated his values and motives; his mastery of the physical means of life and his increasing annihilation of distance together with the conquest of what he understood to be time, had already brought man far down the broad way to exceeding his humanity and setting himself up as a god and controller of destiny. Walking into Africa in that mood he was, by and large, quite incapable of understanding Africa, let alone of appreciating the raw material of mind and spirit with which this granary of fate, this ancient treasure house of the lost original way of life, was so richly filled. To this day if I want information about the stones and mineral deposits of Africa I am embarrassed by the richness of the material instantly placed at my disposal. Yet if I want information about the plants and grasses, as I recently did, I am staggered by the decline in the quality and quantity of the material offered to me. And when I want information that goes below the superficial mechanism of their society, about the people of Africa, if I want information about the peoples themselves, their spirits, languages, and minds, about the things they find funny and the things they believe wonderful, I am dismayed and saddened by the terrible lack of material and interest generally displayed.

I am old enough to remember the enormous hush that fell over Africa in the wake of the coming of European man. In the African heart there was a calm and tense air of expectation of growing wonders to come, and as a result there was also the most moving and wonderful readiness of the African to serve, to imitate, and to follow the European, and finally an unqualified preparedness to love and be loved. My childhood memories of the light of that preparedness in African eyes and its absence in the same eyes today often keeps me awake at night. Remember the small forces that the white man had to use in his first barbarous conflicts: that was due not only to the superiority of the white man's weapons in battle. Today we have even bigger and better weapons than we had then, yet the African has started to fight back against the white man in Kenya, for instance, as never before. No, I think the initial readiness of the black man to serve the white man was perhaps because, unconsciously, he had long waited for someone like the white man to come and bring him something which only the white man could bring. So when he did come, it was as if it was in answer to some dream far back in the African mind and in response to some deep submerged hope that Africa had of the future. The white man's coming seemed to imply the fulfilment of a promise which had been made to the African far back by life in its first beginnings. If this were not so I think the African would quickly have lost heart and died out of sheer discouragement as many an Indian tribe and nation died in the Americas, or as many Papuans and other South Sea islanders died at the coming of the white man in the Pacific. Yet the black man in Africa has not only multiplied but has gone on serving the white man in a way that is almost too good to be true. "Too good to be true." It is, in this context, a poignant phrase.

This period of the hush and suspended indigenous development in Africa was a moment of immense potentiality and hope in the contact between black and white. It contained great opportunity and possibilities for good, which the European at the time had not the power to understand. Often have I seen this period of innocence in the personal relationships between human beings. I have seen it once or twice, too, in the histories of people. I saw it in Indonesia after the last Japanese war. There was a moment, then, when the relief at the defeat of Japan left the whole of occupied Indonesia in a mood out of which something true, good, and lasting might have instantly sprung. I saw the moment vanish and a distorted and twisted element come out of it with a mind and a will and a direction

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of its own, a form of distorted actuality which now has to live out its allotted span and die before anything else can take its place. In Africa, too, I see this moment of innocence and opportunity rapidly vanishing. I think it began to disappear after the First World War. Still at that time the situation was not too bad. But when I came back from this last war, wherever I went I was horrified by the change. Events that were rarities in my childhood days were commonplaces; ritual murder, flesh eating, secret societies raised against authority, lightning eruptions of violence and murder, and often apparently inexplicable outbreaks in areas that had known no unrest for a long time. These things were everywhere on the increase as also the other classic signs of great inner unrest, a gathering drift of displaced persons into towns, the growing numbers of frustrated unemployed and unemployable intellectuals at street corners, the increase of political agitation and social confusion, the apparently senseless smashing of shop windows and inexplicable riots in civilised streets.

Before the last war I wrote, "The windows of the individual mind are shattered long before stones are thrown in the street and the police put to flight by the mob. There is a riot in the human heart and the forces of law and order in the spirit are first overthrown by a nightmare horde." In Africa the same sort of development could mean only one thing for me. The black African's sense of security and of oneness with life had been shaken in a most profound way; his access to life's inmost meaning rudely barred. The spell of the European over him was not only breaking, but his confidence in the European way of life was so shaken that, in a desperate effort to avert the disaster and annihilation which now seemed to threaten him from within, he turned back to the angry powers of his disregarded, discredited, and neglected spirits. Only appeasement of these spirits, as he sees it, can prevent him from losing his hurt aboriginal soul for ever. For no matter how vicious are the forms wherein it expresses itself nor how effective the economic and materialistic trappings wherein it disguises itself, the conflict in Africa is at heart a battle about being and non-being; about having a soul of one's own or not having a soul at all.

WE HAVE a striking illustration of what I mean in the Mau-Mau activities in Kenya, for what has happened to the Kikuyu in Kenya is what has happened to so many other races in Africa. The white man has discredited the African way of living and dealing with the forces of nature about and within, and then obliged him increasingly to live in a way which rejects the institutions, customs, initiation rites and rituals whereby, for centuries, he has struck a balance with those overwhelming aspects of nature which are incomprehensible to reason and quite beyond conscious control and rational articulation. I do not want to imply that it was necessarily bad that this African way of living was discarded. It was inevitable in the nature of things that sooner or later it would either have to die of itself or else be rejected by the Africans themselves before they could move on to something more complete. But what is deplorable is that having discredited this ancient way of living we have not put an honourable alternative in its place. No human being or society, however self-sufficient and rational it may appear, can live without institutions that deal with those aspects of life which cannot be explained rationally. No group of human beings can be left indefinitely outside in the night of the human spirit, in the beast-infested jungle which lies beyond the conscious fortifications which civilised culture raises for *us* in life. If a community cannot get within the protection of those fortifications by fair means then it will do so by foul. If civilised reason and conscious strength will not aid it, then animal cunning and brute force will.

Having then destroyed the cultural defences of the Kikuyu people, it was imperative that we should give them the protection of our way of life and free access to our own institutions. It was all the more imperative in the case of the Kikuyu because they are one of the most intelligent African peoples. But having destroyed their natural defences we

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then denied them our own. Having taken away their way of life we then made it impossible for them to acquire any other. Having supplanted their law by ours we then gave them no right to live as our law demanded but rather forced them to drift suspended in dark acceptance of a state of non-being. That is something that no human race can do and survive. What most terrifies the primitive man is not physical danger but the fear that he may lose his soul. This is implicit in all his ritual, religion, and daily behaviour. I believe Mau-Mau is a desperate attempt on the part of the Kikuyu to prevent such a loss of national soul. What is going on out there at the moment is, in a deep primitive sense, a war of religion. It may be a struggle for a form of religion so crude and base that it must revolt all civilised senses and one which the European is forced to reject with all his power. But it is a war of religion for all that. It is a fight of the Kikuyu for their old Kikuyu gods. It is a battle, as the Romans would have said, for the "ashes of their fathers and the temples of their gods."

As a consequence of unenlightened white policy, somewhere in Africa's hidden being is piling up a sinister power of accumulated energy sufficient to shatter the world that is taking away its soul. Africa is being charged like one of the electronic piles used to split the atom. For Africa, from earth and beast up to the most intelligent of its indigenous children, is not letting this loss of soul take place without a terrible struggle. Even the soil of Africa, this ancient red soil founded on the original rock of the earth, is rebelling against European methods of agriculture and is carrying on a kind of continual "Mau-Mau" against the white man's crops and cattle in Africa. The soil will cooperate no longer and is blown away in clouds of dust under the burning sun, or, during the rains, fills the rivers till they run red with blood to the sea or else bubble like porridge in the steaming marshes. The desert too is advancing on Cape Town at the rate of almost a mile a year, and the white man's expensive and rare European cattle grow sterile and feeble and are reduced to half their former size within a few short cattle generations in tropical Africa. The law of diminishing returns in imported animal husbandry and agriculture in Africa has already set in. Those wise Europeans who have studied Africa closely have read a warning lesson in what has happened to the cattle and goods they brought with them from Europe, and today are turning to the despised African's humped beasts in order to rejuvenate their own European animals. Some of the wisest of them have even rejected their European stock and bred this despised indigenous material with the same care and skill that their forefathers used on the indigenous breeds of Europe, and as a result have been so rewarded by the response of Africa that they have grown rich in the process. But elsewhere the revolt in Africa is all of a piece; the reaction of indigenous soil and indigenous man to the white man's attempt to deny Africa and her children their unique being is one and complete.

THE ONLY thing that is surprising is not the revolt, but the white man's astonishment that it should have happened. When this hush of which I have spoken first fell on Africa, when all these multitudinous African races that had been either plundering and raiding and fighting with one another for thousands of years, or else leading peaceful lives at one with nature, resolving their own dark energies in elaborate and meaningful ritual, when all this suddenly ceased and the black man everywhere put on a dutiful face and meekly did whatever he was told, no matter how contradictory to his past behaviour; when all this dutiful goodness suddenly appeared on the face of this ancient land, you might have thought that someone among the white people would have asked: but where has all this terrific psychic energy that expressed itself in war, migration, nomadic circulation, and elaborate ritual gone? What has become of it? What is it doing? How is it expressing itself? You might have imagined that the white man would have realised that he had to do something about directing the black man's energy

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into legitimate channels, that he had to give him a form of living, equip him liberally with all the safety devices and compensations with which our culture has provided us. Unfortunately no one in Africa asked these questions. Instead, the sudden subservience of the African was taken only as proof absolute of the overwhelming "superiority" of the white man.

"Mata Kelap" is a Malay phrase. "Mata" is the Malay for eye, and "Kelap" for dark. It means the dark eye. It is an expression which is used in Sumatra and Java to describe a curious and disturbing social phenomenon. Socially speaking, the Malays, Sumatrans, and Javanese are the best behaved people I have ever encountered. On the surface they are extremely gentle, refined, submissive people. In fact the word "Malay" comes from "malu" which means "gentle," and gentleness is a quality prized above all others among the Malays and their neighbours. In their family life, in their submission to traditional and parental authority, they are among the most obedient people on earth, and in doing what they take to be their communal duties they are models that would rejoice the most Prussian of hearts. But every now and then something very disturbing happens. A man who has behaved in this obliging manner all his life and who has always done his duty by the outside world to perfection, suddenly finds it impossible to continue doing so. Overnight he revolts against goodness and dutifulness and, knife in hand, goes out and murders everyone who imposed such goodness upon him, father, mother, wife, children, head of the village, or the planter to whom he has been such an exemplary steward. Now when that happens to a man they say in those gentle emerald islands that he has gone "Mata Kelap"; that his eye has darkened within him. In those same islands I was to see "Mata Kelap" on a national and not merely an individual scale, just as we have all seen a similar inky blackness slowly gather in the eyes of some of the most respected European nations, such as the blue German eye. What is happening on a national level in Africa today is the first appearance of Mata Kelap on the African continent. "Mau-Mau" is the most dramatic manifestation we have had yet that the African eye is losing its light and darkening everywhere around us.

One asks: why is the European behaving as he is? Why cannot he see what he is doing to Africa and correct his ways in time? These questions bring me to what I consider to be the most sinister element of all. I myself believe that the European's own eye is so darkened that he can no longer see himself or the things round about him in their full reality. The inner light, "the natural fire within the dark wood of life," as Dante puts it, by which man once lived, is being put out and darkness is welling up like a sea both within and without him. I think the European is blindly and ignorantly provoking all these events in Africa because, in his deepest nature, he is provoking them in himself.

EVER since the Reformation European man has been increasingly at war with himself, and certain aspects of his nature which he has found particularly useful and rewarding for producing his own type of civilisation and culture have been developed excessively at the expense of others, thus doing violence to a very deep and real part of himself. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Up to a point it is the way in which all civilisations have come about. It is, if you like, the Promethean sin which all communities commit in order to enable their culture to evolve. But even such a noble sin, if it is not to lead to disaster, must keep within its own classic proportions. Even virtue owes homage to proportion. If it cannot learn the discipline of proportion freely from within it has to learn it from disaster without, for whatever goes too far begets a violent reaction in order that it may be brought back into position. Unfortunately it appears to be a rule of life that societies should find it almost impossible, without disaster in the physical world, to reverse an outworn evolutionary process. Except for that wonderful creative moment in our history when the two extremities of human nature, the natural, instinctive pagan element and the rational, conscious, forward-moving Christian aware-

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ness came close enough to produce that flash of lightning which dazzles our imagination and which we call the Renaissance, except for that moment of rebirth and awakening of modern man we have swung to an extreme wherein the natural man within us not only has had very little honour, but also his rich intuitive and instinctive promptings have been thrown summarily out of the courts of our reason—just as the aborigines of our time have been despised and rejected by western man.

NOW IN a profound sense every man has two halves to his being; he is not one person so much as two persons trying to act in unison. I believe that in the heart of each human being there is something which I can only describe as a "child of darkness" who is equal and complementary to the more obvious "child of light." Whether we know it or not we all have within us a natural instinctive man, a dark brother, to whom we are irrevocably joined as to our own shadow. However much our conscious reason may reject him he is there for good or ill, clamouring for recognition and awareness and a fair share of life just as the less conscious black man of Africa is struggling and clamouring for life, light, and honour in our societies. I need not emphasise how the rational, calculating, acutely reasoning, and determined human being that Western man has made of himself has increasingly considered this side of himself not as a brother but as an enemy, capable with his upsurges of rich emotion and colourful impulses of wrecking conscious man's carefully planned and closely reasoned way of existence.

I find some confirmation of this in the violence of our present-day colour prejudice. Hitherto this violence had not existed in Europe. When my forefathers landed more than three hundred years ago in the Cape of Good Hope the colour prejudice was much less marked, and today we have the million "coloured" people of the Cape colony as proof of it. In the traditional ritual of the Christian churches too, one of the three wise men of the East was a black man and his presence among the three sages who attended Christ in His crib at Bethlehem seemed necessary to make the symbolism of the event complete in European imagination. But in recent generations this colour prejudice among Europeans has become so powerful and destructive that it threatens to break out in increasing bloodshed in Africa. Significantly, too, everywhere in the world it has become more powerful and explosive according to the extent to which the distance has widened between over-rational, specialised modern man and his national roots. This separation of the white man with his bright morning face from his own dark rejected brother within, increases with frightening acceleration. So prejudice against the black skin of the natural African has deepened and made it a dangerous symbol, for now the white man in Africa sees reflected in the natural dark man around him that dark aspect of himself which he has rejected. Consequently, he confuses the reflection without with the dark reality within, and without hesitation engages in fruitless and mutually disastrous battle with it.

There are the proverbs of many nations which suggest that hatred is akin to love. I suggest, therefore, that the struggle in Africa is so deadly and tragic just because, secretly, the black natural man in Africa attracts the European no matter how much he consciously rejects him. I say this with confidence because after all I was born in Africa and have not only lived with the prejudices of which I am speaking but have also shared them. Then one day I realised that, far back in my childhood, there was a moment when none of these prejudices had existed in me. I discovered in looking back that the real kings, queens, and princes, the witches and the wizards and magicians and all the vivid fairy-tale personalities who gave my childhood life a richer meaning were not the virtuous, disapproving Europeans but our black, yellow, and copper-coloured servants, almost all of whom have long since vanished, though their names still make music in me. It was they who played a part in my imagination which no European could ever usurp. I suspect that at a deep level the same thing is true of my

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countrymen in South Africa, and I suspect that if the European in Africa could only rediscover and honour in his imagination this natural moment at the beginning of his own life, then this unnatural tension would begin to disappear.

Dr. Carl Jung says somewhere that the aspect of themselves which human beings sacrifice in the attainment of a given object in their lives is reborn *alive* and comes back after many years, knife in hand, demanding to sacrifice that which sacrificed it. I think in this we have a picture of the dilemma, not only of Africa, but of the whole modern world. The whole problem of modern culture expresses the need for some transcendent factor or purpose wherein neither white nor black, neither natural nor thinking man, will have to be sacrificed to one another but both joined and made complete in one transcending purpose.

THE unrest in Africa, in all its facets, European, cosmic, global, and African, is an extension of our own individual unrest. I, who was born in Africa, have experienced again and again a need which made no rational sense to me to return and explore Africa. Then one night sitting alone in the bush in Africa with nothing but my black bearers round me, suddenly I realised the meaning of my own compulsion, and perhaps too the explanation of the world's extraordinary interest in Africa. I realised in a flash that I walked Africa in this manner because only thus was I able to walk among the mysteries and uncomprehended complexities of my own heart and mind. I discovered that I travelled in Africa in this way because it brought me to unknown places in my own uncomprehended spirit which I could not have reached in any other manner.

Perhaps therein resides the miracle and the meaning of Africa for all of us. Modern man with his grievous and crippling realisation of having lost the sense of his own beginnings, with this agonising feeling of great and growing estrangement from nature, finds that life holds up Africa like a magic mirror miraculously preserved before his darkening eyes. In this great glass of time the inmost reflections of his ancient, timeless spirit stare out at him, and he can, could he but realise it, rediscover there his despised and rejected natural self, recognising before it is too late the full horror of his stubborn rejection of it.

There is a memory that has lived with me all my life from childhood which gives living illustration of this point. As children we used to take our mirrors, stand them on the ground in front of our tame baboons, and then watch the creatures as for the first time they saw their own faces reflected back at them. It was amusing because the baboons could not realise that what they were looking at in the mirror was the reflection of themselves. The mechanism of reflection was quite beyond their comprehension and they could not accept the ugly, grimacing, increasingly irritable features staring back at them as their own. The only explanation of what they saw in the mirror was that there was another baboon in front of them, so they promptly looked for the stranger beast. They tried to touch its face but felt only the glass against their purple fingers. They looked again and again behind the mirror but the elusive creature could not be found. The only solution in the end was to pick up the mirror and smash it to pieces on the ground in their rage!

I believe the greatest of all mirrors of our age is Africa. We all, East and West and bewildered 20th century man, stare into it as if hypnotised but, like the baboons, we do not see and recognise in it the reflection of our own hidden selves. Let us pray that we shall not destroy this precious magic mirror in our rage.

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Claud Cockburn

War Games

A Memoir of the "Good Old Days"

IN OUR little house, the question was whether the war would break out first, or the revolution. This was around 1910.

That period before the First World War has since got itself catalogued as a minor Golden Age. People living then are said to have had a sense of security, been unaware of impending catastrophe, unduly complacent. In our neighbourhood, they worried. They thought it was the Victorians who had had a sense of security and been unduly complacent.

There were war scares every year, all justified. There was the greatest surge of industrial unrest ever seen. There was a crime wave. The young were demoralised. In 1911, without any help from television or the cinema or the comics, some Yorkshire schoolboys, irked by discipline, set upon an unpopular teacher and murdered him.

Naturally, alongside those who viewed with alarm, there were those who thought things would probably work out all right. Prophets of doom and Polyannas, Dr. Pangloss and Calamity Jane, all lived near us in Hertfordshire in those years, and I well remember being taken to call on them all, on fine afternoons, in the open landau, for a treat.

At home, the consensus was that the war would come before the revolution. This, as can be seen from the newspaper files, was not the most general view. At our house, however, people thought war was not any nicer than revolution, but more natural.

It was in 1910 that my father desired me to stop playing French and English with my tin soldiers and play Germans and English instead. That was a bother, for there was a character on a white horse who was Napoleon —in fact, a double Napoleon; because he was dead Napoleon who fought Waterloo and who was also alive, getting ready to attack the Chiltern Hills where we lived. It was awkward changing him into an almost unheard of Marshal von Moltke.

Guests came to lunch and talked about the coming German invasion. On Sundays, when my sister and I lunched in the dining-room instead of the nursery, we heard about it. It spoiled afternoon walks on the hills with Nanny, who until then had kept us happy learning the names of the small wild flowers growing there. I thought Uhlans with lances and flat-topped helmets might come charging over the hill any afternoon now. One night, at hay-making time when the farm carts trundled home late, I lay awake in the dusk and trembled. Evidently they had come, and their endless gun-carriages were rolling up the lane. My sister said to go to sleep; it was all right because we had a British soldier staying in the house. This was Uncle Philip, a

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half-pay Major of Hussars, whose hands had been partially paralysed as a result of some accident at polo.

His presence that night was a comfort. But his conversation was often alarming, particularly after he had been playing the War Game.

IN THE garden there was a big shed or small barn, and inside the shed was the War Game. It was played on a table a good deal bigger, as I recall, than a billiard table, and was strategically scientific. So much so, indeed, that the game was used for instructional purposes at the Staff College. Each team of players had so many guns of different calibre, so many divisions of troops, so many battleships, cruisers, and other instruments of war. You threw dice, and operated your forces according to the value of the throw. Even so, the possible moves were regulated by rules of extreme realism.

The game sometimes took three whole days to complete, and it always over-excited Uncle Philip. The time he thought he had caught the Japanese Admiral cheating he almost had a fit—not because the Japanese really was cheating, as it turned out, but because of the way he proved he was not cheating.

The Admiral and some other Japanese officers on some sort of goodwill mission to Britain had come to lunch and afterwards played the War Game. As I understand it, they captured from the British team—made up of my father, two uncles, and a cousin on leave from the Indian Army—a troopship. It was a Japanese cruiser which made the capture, and, at his next move, the Admiral had this cruiser move the full number of squares which his throw of the dice would normally have allowed it. Uncle Philip accused him of stealthily breaking the rules. He should have deducted from the value of his throw the time it would have taken to transfer and accommodate the captured soldiers before sinking the troopship. He found the proper description of this cruiser in *Jane's Fighting Ships* and demonstrated that it would have taken a long time—even in calm weather—to get the prisoners settled aboard.

The Admiral said, "But we threw the prisoners overboard." He refused to retract his move.

Uncle Philip hurled the dice-box through the window of the shed and came storming up to the house. Even in the nursery could be heard his curdling account of the massacre on the destroyer.

"Sea full of sharks, of course. Our men absolutely helpless. Pushed over the side at the point of the bayonet. Damned cruiser forging ahead through water thickening with blood as the sharks got them."

Uncle Philip's imagination was powerful and made holes in the walls of reality. He used to shout up at the nursery for someone to come and hold his walking stick upright at a certain point on the lawn while he paced off some distances. These were the measurements of the gunroom of the shooting lodge he was going to build on the estate he was going to buy in Argyllshire when he had won £20,000 in the Calcutta Sweep. Sometimes he would come to the conclusion that he had made this gunroom too small—barely room to swing a cat. Angrily he would start pacing again, and often find that this time the place was too large. "I don't want a thing the size of a barn, do I?" he would shout.

ONCE, some years earlier, his imagination functioned so powerfully that it pushed half the British fleet about. That was at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, when the fleet was drawn up for review at Spithead in the greatest assembly of naval power anyone had ever seen. Uncle Philip and my father were invited by the Admiral commanding one of the squadrons to lunch with him on his flagship. An attaché of the Admiral Commanding-in-Chief was also among those present.

Half-way through lunch, Uncle Philip began to develop an idea. Here, he said, was the whole British fleet gathered at Spithead, without steam up, immobile. Across there, was Cherbourg. (At that time the war, when it came, was going to be against the French.)

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Well, suppose one night—tonight, for instance—some passionately Anglophobe commander of a French torpedo-boat were to get the notion of dashing across the Channel in the dark and tearing between the lines of the great ships, loosing off torpedoes? The ships helpless without steam up. In twenty minutes, half of them sinking. In an hour, Britain's power reduced to the level of Portugal's. By dawn, the Solent strewn with the wreckage of an Empire. Before noon, mobs crazed with triumph and wine sweeping along the Paris boulevards, yelling for the *coup de grâce*.

He spoke of this, my uncle said, not as an idle speculation, but because he happened to have recalled, on his way to this lunch, that in point of fact a French officer, just mad enough to carry out such a project, was at this moment in command of a torpedo-boat at Cherbourg. (His voice, as he said this, compelled a closer attention by the Admiral and the attaché of the Commander-in-Chief.)

Certainly, he said: —he had met the man himself, a Captain Moret, a Gascon. Hot-blooded, hating the English for all the ordinary French reasons, and for another reason, too; his only sister—a young and beautiful girl, Uncle Philip believed—had been seduced and brutally abandoned by an English Lieutenant, name of Hoadley, or Hoathly, at Toulon. A fanatic, this Moret. Had a trick of gesturing with his cigar—like this (Uncle Philip sketched the gesture)—as he, Moret, expatiated on his favourite theory, the theory of the underrated powers of the torpedo-boat as the guerilla of the sea.

"And there," said Uncle Philip, in a slightly eerie silence, "he is." He nodded ominously in the direction of Cherbourg.

On the way back to Cowes in the Admiral's launch, my father upbraided Uncle Philip. A nice exhibition he had made of himself—a mere Major of Hussars, lecturing a lot of Admirals and Captains on how to run their business. Also they had undoubtedly seen through this yarn, realised that this Moret was a figment of Uncle Philip's imagination, invented half-way through the fish course. Then, and during the remainder of the afternoon and early evening, Uncle Philip was abashed, contrite. After dinner that evening they walked by the sea, taking a final look at the fleet in the summer dusk. Silently my uncle pointed at the far-flung line. Every second ship in the line was getting up steam.

REAL life, like curry, which he ate Anglo-Indian fashion, so hot it would have charred a real Indian's stomach, was never quite sharp enough for Uncle Philip. The weary present he made endurable to his taste by a sort of incantation. He recited old French ballads aloud as he walked to the village, or simply shouted agreeably sonorous words. You asked him where he was going and he peered through his monocle and shouted, "I am on my way to the headquarters of his Supreme Excellency the Field Marshal Ghazi Ahmed Mukhta Pasha." As for the future, Uncle Philip seasoned it with the Calcutta Sweep and the imminence of a very interesting war. As things turned out, he never did win the Sweep, and the war was no fun either. He got himself back into the Army, despite his crippled hands, but the cold and damp undermined his health and laid him low.

The theoretical basis of Uncle Philip's belief that war was coming soon was quite simple. He thought any Government which supposed itself to have a reasonable advantage in armaments and manpower over its neighbours or rivals would go for them as soon as it was convinced that this was the case, and provided the weather was suitable for the type of campaign its armies preferred. In this view he had the concurrence of my Uncle Frank, my father's elder brother, who in other respects was so different from Uncle Philip that he might have been brought up on a different planet. But he did enjoy the War Game, finding it more sensible than cards, and even made, in collaboration with Uncle Philip, some suggestions for changes in the rules which were sent to the Staff College, or whatever the strategic institution was that used the Game, and I believe adopted there.

He was a banker and a Canadian, and he took, uninhibitedly, the view that the world

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was a jungle and civilisation a fine but flimsy tent which anyone would be a fool either not to enjoy or to treat as a secure residence. Compared to the rest of the family he was rich. Enormously so, I thought at the time, for there seemed to be nothing he could not afford, and I was told once that he actually had a lot more than Uncle Philip would have if he drew the winning ticket in the Sweep.

During those years, when we were moving about Southern England looking, my father kept assuring me, for somewhere to settle down permanently, Uncle Frank was a frequent visitor, fleeting, but as impressive as a big firework.

His headquarters were at Montreal, but the place where he felt at home was Mexico. He spent a lot of time there, helping to organise some kind of revolution or counter-revolution —nominally in the interests of the bank, but mainly because that was the kind of work he liked. The details were never fully revealed to us. This was due partly to discretion, partly to the fact that the precise lines and objectives of the undertaking—which once had been a quite simple business of violently overthrowing the Government—had become year by year increasingly complex and uncertain.

Nobody seemed to know just whose side anyone was on, which Generals and politicians and rival financiers and concessionaires were good—that is to say, pro-Uncle Frank—and which bad. Not, I think, that he cared much about that. He enjoyed a colourful kind of plotting for its own sake, regardless of the monotonous aims of the fogies back in Montreal.

People would say, "But I thought so-and-so was the man you were supporting? Wasn't he the one who was so good and was going to save the country?" And Uncle Frank would say vaguely that that had been before that business when whatsisname shot up that bunch of thingummies, that time in Vera Cruz. There would follow a story full of sunshine and pistols and oil—very exciting and even intelligible, as far as it went, like a battle scene from a Shakespearean drama.

It seemed to be wonderful to have a job where that sort of thing was your business, and you were praised for your hard work doing it. The banking business attracted me a good deal—a banker, evidently, was something between Long John Silver and the Scarlet Pimpernel, and rich, too, and respected. The clerk at the local branch of The London, County, Westminster and Parr's became a figure of romance. I made up stories about his secret life.

UNCLE FRANK proclaimed himself a "reactionary." This piece of news went around among the neighbours and was applauded. They were deep-blue Conservatives, but already nervous of calling themselves, uncompromisingly, "reactionaries." Yet they found it comforting when someone else was unashamed to do so. My mother, active in the Women's Conservative Association and the Primrose League, did not care for the word at all. A devout and serious Christian, she was often bothered by what she read of Socialists because she could not, instantly and absolutely, see where they were so wrong. To her horrified ear, they kept sounding as though they had ideas rather like Christ's.

This hesitancy of mind ashamed her. She felt it to be a kind of betrayal of Mr. Bonar Law and Lord Balfour. She would steady herself by thinking about the atheistic opinions of Socialists in France.

Uncle Frank was, in his way, more disturbing, as a fellow-traveller in the Conservative caravan, than the Christian-looking Socialists roaming the desert. He treated all politics as some kind of sordid Mexican brawl about money and land, and took for granted that anyone pretending to a different attitude was merely practising a cunning hypocrisy, deceiving simpletons for the sake of votes. To listen to talk about patriotism, the good of the community, progress and the imperial ideal, except when the words came from a platform for a practical political purpose, bored him shockingly.

His period of popularity among the local gentry as a visiting imperial lion from the Great Dominion did not endure. He was taken to some garden party held in the Con-

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servative interest, and there introduced by the Vicar to a young barrister who had political ambitions and was popular for his renderings of "Yip-I-Yaddy-I-Ay." This person said to him, "I must say, Mr. Cockburn, I do admire your courage—I hear you are not afraid to call yourself a reactionary." He then, according to my father, who was present, neighed.

Uncle Frank, who had been in a trance, looking at the back view of the village church and meditating on episodes of the Trojan War, or the current price of hogs in Chicago (he habitually carried volumes of bank reports on trade and pocket editions of Homer in his pockets "in case I get bored"), or whatever it was, took a moment to focus on this remark, and the musical barrister filled the pause by stating that he himself was a bit of a reactionary, too.

Uncle Frank shouted his approval. "You're absolutely right," he said, "everything since ancient Greece has been a mistake. Of course, the real trouble is Christianity, don't you agree? My idea of a real, dangerous damn fool is the Emperor Constantine. What an ass!"

My father remarked gently that the Vicar quite possibly did not agree with him. Uncle Frank, when he was talking to one person, often forgot that anyone else was present, and he now turned to the Vicar with an apologetic bow. "I don't," he said, "mean to say a word against Christianity as a religion. It's fine. But it's unsuitable."

"Unsuitable?" said the Vicar.

"To the human race," said Uncle Frank. "That's where Constantine was a damn fool. Another hundred years of steady persecution and they'd have had the Christians licked. They could have got right back. After all," he said to the Vicar, "as a God there wasn't much wrong with Zeus."

The story went around that he had sworn at the Vicar and insulted the Church of England, but he was not there to hear it, for next morning he succumbed, once again, to what my father referred to as "Frank's deplorable weakness for this fellow Aitken." He went off to London to see the Canadian financier, Sir William Maxwell Aitken, afterwards Baron Beaverbrook, who had lately embarked on the English stage of his career.

THEY had been financial associates, and later close friends in Canada, and all his life Uncle Frank secretly thought that Max Aitken was practically the only man in England who approached things realistically. Secretly, that is, so far as our household was concerned, because my father, although he had never met the future Lord Beaverbrook and insisted he had nothing against him personally, thought he was a portent—boding no good.

After the First World War, and the rise of the newspaper proprietor to immense power, my father was more than ever convinced of this.

My uncle, when he was in England, liked to go and talk about money, and imperial politics, and—on occasion—religion and poetry with Rudyard Kipling and Bonar Law and Lord Beaverbrook at the latter's Surrey home. One day, when he was planning such a visit, my father said to him that if he went from our house to Lord Beaverbrook's he need not bother himself to return. Thereafter, when he wanted to make such a visit, Uncle Frank pretended he was only going to London for a couple of days on business. But since he needed an intermediary who could forward urgent cables to him if necessary, he had to take me into his confidence.

"It's a pity," he said, "your father should feel this way about Max. Your father," he added sadly, "doesn't understand about Max."

Though he found such an association shocking, my father felt sorry for Uncle Frank, considering that he should be pitied rather than censured.

"No doubt," he would say in extenuation of his brother's choice of friends, "a banker has to associate a good deal with financiers and people of that kind. Naturally. Your Uncle Frank has had a hard life, you know. You see, ever since he was a young man, he has had to deal with *money*."

This, to his mind, melancholy fact explained a great deal. It explained why his

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brother, of whom he was very fond, should have developed a view of life which seemed, to my father, lacking in delicacy and understanding of reality.

EACH of them had been initially propelled along their widely divergent roads by the same force—namely the high principles of my grandfather, a younger son of Lord Cockburn, the great Scottish Advocate and Judge who shone so brightly in the Golden Age of Edinburgh society. The adults surrounding my grandfather's youth were gay, civilised, and earnest. They would not have understood how, later, earnestness became a term of disdain, and was supposed to be incompatible with gaiety. They took life, as the saying goes, seriously. To take it any other way would have been, in them, a sign of despair.

When my grandfather was about fourteen he liked to make explosions by pouring gunpowder out of a horn into the kitchen furnace. Then his hand slipped, the whole of the gunpowder slid down the stone funnel into the furnace, and the explosion blew off his right arm. It was a horrid disaster to which relatives near and far reacted immediately and in the same way: before the week was out he received from uncles, aunts, and cousins all over Scotland eleven separate presents of writing desks, to encourage him to lose no time in learning to write with his left hand.

He learned not only to write but to drive a carriage and pair in a dashing manner. He went to India in the service of the old East India Company, lived in an oriental splendour which caused remark even in those unbridled days, became a Judge in the Administration of the new Indian Empire, and retired to Edinburgh intending to spend the remainder of his days in reasonably rich comfort. He lived, in fact, well, and was astonished at the comment of the son of some Rajah who came to visit him. The young man had seen my grandfather only with the trappings of a high British official in India. After what in Edinburgh was esteemed a rather magnificent dinner, the Indian asked permission to pose an indiscreet question. "Sir," he said, "after your life in India, is it not irksome to exist in this state of indigent obscurity?"

Later, the indigence became, comparatively speaking, a fact. The cost of living rose. So did the number of relatives who for various reasons had to be supported by grandfather. Many of them were young women, more or less distant cousins whose parents had left them penniless. It might, even then, have been possible for them to support themselves by some kind of work, but they said, "Our dear mother would not have liked it," and that, in the circumstances of the time, was undeniably true. In the end, grandfather had to get a second house in Edinburgh to put some of them in. Seeking to ease the financial strain, he took his own immediate family to Bonn, on the Rhine, which was cheaper and warmer.

Frank, eldest male among seven children, was to go to work—in Canada, because friends said it was a fine place for a young man, particularly a Scotsman. Arrangements were made to get him, for a start, a good job in an engineering concern there. It was a new and prosperous concern and prospects were said to be fine. Just before he sailed it was discovered that the managing director of this firm was a friend of an intimate friend of grandfather. The mutual friend had actually written to him asking him to keep a favourable eye on Uncle Frank. My grandfather was appalled. He felt at once that this necessitated a change in the carefully laid plans. As he pointed out to Uncle Frank, there was now, as a result of this deplorable turn of events, a distinct possibility that this director in Canada would feel obligated to show special consideration and favour to the lad—advance his interests by various means, give him preferential treatment. This would be morally wrong. In the circumstances, the only proper course was for Frank to write, withdrawing from the job in the engineering firm, and—on landing in Canada—simply do the best he could. That was how he happened to start working for a moribund bank in Quebec. He worked sixteen or seventeen hours a day and ate only at breakfast time. Late at night he

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drank cocoa, which he tried to make more interesting and long-lasting by each night decorating the cocoa-jug with elaborately painted Greek verses and proverbs. The largest inscription he made on the jug was the Greek text of "For the night cometh when no man can work"—*Nux gar erchetai*, etc. Years later the jug stood prominent on the study mantelshelf in his big house in Montreal, and was referred to by the staff—bidden to treat it reverently—as "the Nuxgar Jug."

THE period of penury and cocoa did not, in fact, last very long. Thousands of miles from Bonn, and exhilarated by the atmosphere of Canadian business, Uncle Frank soon pushed his way out of the torpid bank for which he had originally gone to work and into the Bank of Montreal, which was booming and brimming with opportunity. But at Bonn, in the meantime, another crisis had occurred.

For more than a year it had been understood that my father was to enter the Indian Civil Service, an ambition which had been his since he was fifteen. Indeed, to a young man brought up on Plutarch's Lives and the history of Rome, the Indian Civil Service in those days seemed to offer limitless scope for the realisation of boyhood dreams—a subcontinent to be organised and governed, power to be exercised over millions of people, a game with whole kingdoms and principalities on the board.

At that time the examination for the Indian Civil Service was the most rigorous and the most highly competitive in existence—the prospects and prizes of that Service attracted hundreds of the most brilliant and the most ambitious. The age limits within which candidates were eligible were such that you could make, if necessary, three attempts in three successive years. Almost nobody expected to be among the winners at his first attempt, which was regarded chiefly as a trial run, a way of getting, so to speak, to know the course. If you did fairly well then, you could make your serious attempt next year.

My father at his first attempt failed by only two places. It was considered a spectacular achievement. His success at the second attempt seemed certain. But, perhaps made over-confident by this achievement, he was rash enough, in the course of a theological discussion with grandfather at Bonn, to disclose that under the influence of German philosophy he had become an atheist.

Grandfather was distressed, but felt that his first duty was to the Indians, whom he had so long helped to govern, and to the British Empire in India. He still had some influence at the India Office and with the Government of India. He travelled to London, saw influential and authoritative friends holding power in that branch of Government, and disclosed the unpleasant situation which had arisen. It was obviously monstrous, inadmissible, that an avowed atheist should get into the Indian Civil Service, particularly as the young man concerned was evidently of exceptional ability and might quite quickly rise to a position of power and importance. Grandfather believed strongly in the value of the Christian religion as an ideological instrument of imperial rule. An atheist in such a position might cause havoc and wreckage. He therefore desired those in authority to take whatever steps were necessary to ensure that, however brilliantly he might perform in the examination, my father should not be admitted to the Service.

He then returned to Bonn and reported his actions to my father, who knew quite enough about the workings of what is nowadays called "The Old Boy Net" to realise that as things now stood he had considerably less chance of entering the Indian Civil Service than he did of entering the Church of England and becoming a Bishop. Enough strings had been pulled in London to keep an archangel out of Delhi if he were caught disbelieving in the Thirty-Nine Articles.

MY FATHER was bitter about the way things had turned out and wished he had kept his mouth shut about atheism. But he liked and admired people who knew their own minds and had convictions upon which

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they really acted, and he did not quarrel with grandfather.

"After all," he said to me long afterwards, "a person ought to carry his beliefs to their logical conclusion. I think I should have been rather dismayed if father had done anything else. It would have seemed so feeble. Given his opinions on religion and Government, it was the only sensible thing for him to do."

"He might," I said, "at least have tried to convert you."

"But you see," said my father, "he took for granted that everyone else's views were as unshakable as his own. And he would have thought, too, that I might be tempted to make a false pretence of conversion—which would have been bad for my moral character; and then later, when I was Lieutenant-Governor I might have come out in my true colours and started massacring the missionaries, or forced them to give readings from Feuerbach from their pulpits."

It was, however, clear that life at home had reached an impasse, and, not wishing to take any further chances with grandfather's convictions, my father sold all his books and all except one suit of clothes and disappeared to London. When his family next heard from him, he had secretly sat for, and passed, his entrance examination for the Eastern Consular Service, which was then a kind of half-way house between the Diplomatic Service—for which you needed a lot of money—and the ordinary Consular Service which dealt mainly with commercial affairs and was confined to Europe and the western hemisphere. The point about the Eastern Consular Service was that it functioned east of Singapore, and that it was possible to pass from it into regular diplomatic service in the Far East.

He went to China and never left it until he was thirty years old. From his nineteenth to his twenty-second year he was British Vice-Consul at the then awfully remote city of Chungking. It was the most isolated British agency in Asia. The city had three hundred thousand inhabitants and was the pivotal point of trade along the Yangtse between central China and the south-east. But foreign trade was officially barred. In the whole of those four years he saw only half a dozen Europeans—none of them, as he remarked with satisfaction, "unduly obtrusive." Since there was almost no trade, there was no tiresome routine work. His duties, in fact, were vague. He was simply an outpost. His life was full and happy, gay and studious by turns. There were at Chungking excellent professors of philosophy, poetry, and calligraphy. The political intrigues, in which as British agent he became involved, were intricate, dangerous, and delightful. Once a month he conducted a public exercise in imperialism.

At that time it was forbidden for foreigners to reside on or even visit that part of Chungking lying on the right bank of the Yangtse. Rightly, the Chinese believed that if you gave the foreigners an inch they would take an ell. Once a month my father—designing to establish precedents and break down this ban—used to send a formal notification to the Governor, who resided on the right bank, that the British Vice-Consul proposed to call on him on a certain date. The Governor, not wishing to make a formal breach of relations, always acceded. On the day fixed, my father was transported across the river and was met on the opposite bank by the Governor's litter, with a heavy guard of soldiers. The steep streets to the Governor's residence were lined with furiously hostile crowds—their natural hatred of the intruder encouraged and stimulated when necessary by agents of the Governor. They pelted the litter with stones. Every couple of hundred yards the litter was halted while the soldiers battled with the populace.

At the Governor's residence the Governor entertained the Vice-Consul and they talked for a couple of hours. At some point during the conversation, the Vice-Consul took occasion to remark with satisfaction that it was now evidently the policy of the Imperial Government to permit an Englishman to visit the right bank of the river at Chungking. At some other point the Governor would take occasion to express his satisfaction that in this single instance it had been possible for the Imperial authorities to suspend for a few hours the inviolable rule against the presence

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of foreigners on the right bank, and that the efficiency of the troops had sufficed to curb, on this particular day, the profound indignation of the people.

The parting ceremony was also a somewhat elaborate manœuvre, it being necessary for the Vice-Consul to take his leave in words carrying the general sense of *au revoir*, whereas the Governor must give his courteous parting remarks the unmistakable nuance of an *adieu*. Then came the progress back to the river, with stoning, battles, and occasional bloodshed.

When I was a little boy I thought it must have been a very grand feeling to be carried thus in a magnificent litter, an outpost of Empire with hostile thousands roaring for one's blood. "Didn't you," I asked my father, "feel grand and triumphant?"

"A little, sometimes," he said. "But then I tried, too, to remember that to those people I didn't look grand at all. I reminded myself that to them I was physically an evil-smelling monkey, and in character and status a vulgar barbarian thief trying to break into China. An excellent spiritual exercise."

MUCH later, when I was sixteen or so, I bothered him with another sort of question.

"Were you always absolutely sure it was a good thing to try to extend British power in China?"

"Absolutely."

"But you don't much like English people. You prefer Chinese."

"Hang it, I like some English people."

"Not many."

"True."

"You don't care for their attitude to life. You know they bore you to death. Secretly, everything they say seems to you platitudinous or else untrue."

"A lot of Chinese are awfully silly, too."

"And you spent more than half your life working to help the English dominate the Chinese."

"It's nothing to do with people. It's a question of realising an idea."

" 'The Imperial Idea'?"

"I hope you're not getting that deplorable habit of picking phrases out of newspapers and using them without knowing what they mean. A good thing to do is to read two pages of the New Oxford Dictionary every day. You get the exact derivations of all words and their differing shades of meaning at different periods. An excellent habit."

"You seem to be changing the subject."

"Let's play a game of chess."

He seemed unaware of any contradiction in his attitude. He did not care to argue about it. He did say once that talking to me about it was like trying to explain music to a deaf child. It was tedious to make clear to a person who did not grasp it immediately how one could deplore almost every material and spiritual manifestation of the Empire and still dedicate oneself to its expansion and consolidation as the highest Good.

Between leaving Bonn and retiring, he spent more than thirty years in China and Korea, and less than that number of months in England. Except for the countryside in springtime, he did not care much for anything about England. About the personalities and forces—political, financial, commercial—which motivated and directed the imperial machine, he had, as they say, no illusions. He found them comical, subjects for savage ribaldry. Or pathetic. Or sordid. And often simply ignoble. The machine, on the other hand—that was admirable and good: a fine bit of work, satisfactory and even inspiring to tend. Perhaps his reference to music was the clue. He was listening, perhaps, to some strange symphony. The rest was as irrelevant as would be the fact that the composer took dope and the conductor lived on the immoral earnings of women.

HE MOVED into the Far Eastern Diplomatic Service and as "Chinese Secretary" at the Peking Legation was for a long time the principal liaison between the British Government and the foundering dynasty of the Manchus. Secretly, he intrigued on behalf of an immense scheme which he thought might ensure British domination of Asia for generations. The idea came to him—others

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may have had the same motives earlier and independently—while watching the special Legation Guard of Punjab Lancers sent up from India. Suppose, as a gesture of friendship and courtesy, the British Government were to offer to lend certain trained Indian troops to the Imperial House as a reliable bodyguard against the subversive elements which seethed around it? He knew, from discreet soundings, that important officials in the Palace would be favourable. They would like to have troops who would be safe from contamination by revolutionaries and throne-seekers. Over a period of years, such a Guard —corresponding, he pointed out, to the Scottish Archer Guard of the French Kings— would be developed from a toy to a real instrument of power. In a dozen or twenty years, these Janissaries would become indispensable. As such, they would work for the Dynasty, but also, in the last analysis, control it and its policies. And the Guard, in turn, would of course ultimately be controlled by the Government of India.

At a suitable moment somewhere along the line—there could easily be "trouble" in India —the Chinese Government would offer to "facilitate" the recruitment of Chinese troops for "garrison service" in India. Within a half century or so, the trained manpower of China —under British control—would be on tap to hold India against any possibility of successful revolt, and the manpower of India—under British control—would be the decisive military force in China. "The beauty of it is," he would say, "that the Chinese and the Indians really hate and despise each other even more than they hate and despise us. And of course that would be something that could be fostered—there would be very little danger of fraternisation. Occupying forces are bound to be thoroughly unpopular."

By hindsight the scheme appears merely preposterous. In reality there was a kind of crazy feasibility about it. He worked at it for years, and in the days shortly before and after the Boxer Rising, when on terms almost of intimacy with the sinister old Empress Dowager, he used to discuss it in an abstract, allusive kind of way with her. When he felt that it was ripe enough to be presented, cautiously, to British "official circles," he found that they did not by any means have the courage of his convictions. They professed themselves dreadfully shocked. Perhaps it was his method of presentation they found unpalatable. In dealing with British officials he sometimes left behind the wrappings of tact and double-talk he could employ so naturally and successfully with the Chinese, because the Chinese regarded double-talk as a courtesy and did not expect anyone even to pretend to believe in it. Apparently in outlining his plan to the British he forgot, until it was too late, to make the indispensable statement that the aim of the whole thing was of course to uplift, spiritually and materially, both the Indian and Chinese peoples, offering them greater and greater opportunities of self-betterment, guiding their steps along the path to ultimate self-government.

Large phrases of this kind about the Empire were received by him with derision or an unpleasant silence. He said he liked to feel, when taking part in an all-night, whisky-drenched poker session at the Shanghai Club, that the long-term purpose of the gathering was to elevate the cultural standards of the Chinese. He caused offence at a public dinner at Amoy by declaring his belief that the true function of our business community in China, with its fine appreciation of the good things of life, was to bring some modicum of civilisation to the missionaries.

Just before the Nationalist outbreak of 1900 he went briefly to England, married, and returned with my mother in time to be besieged in the Legation quarter by the Boxers. Because of the official acceptance of reports that the Legations had fallen and the besieged all been killed, he had the pleasure of reading his own obituary notice in the newspapers. He had always been in grave trouble with the finance-controllers in London on account of his heavy and ingeniously contrived overspending of a special "entertainment" allowance. He wrote to the Foreign Office noting with pleasure that these

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difficulties were not mentioned in the obituary notices, based on official information, and were therefore evidently recognised as of a trivial nature. Dr. Morrison, the famous China correspondent of *The Times*, who was also among the besieged, simply cabled the paper saying, "Have just read obituary in *The Times*. Kindly adjust pay to suit."

I was born at Peking, on the day the Japanese blew up the Russian flagship *Petropavlosk* at Port Arthur, and spent the first few weeks of life at Wei-hai-wei, which until a couple of years before had been the headquarters of the British-officered Chinese regiment which my father had seen as a primitive instrument of the Sino-Indian plan. People used to stare northwards across the sea at night and claim they could see the flashes of great naval battles in the Port Arthur direction. My Chinese amah, who had seen the looting of Peking by the foreign troops, expected the Japanese or the Russians to land at any minute and massacre everyone. She was glad to take me to England, but there the boys shouted and threw stones at her in the street because she wore blue trousers, and she longed to return.

My father became Minister of Korea while it was still nominally independent, and then Consul-General as the Japanese progressively took over control. He thought the whole British agreement with the Japanese on the Korean issue disastrous. He was offered another Ministerial post. Quite suddenly he announced he was weary of the whole business and retired, saying that at forty-nine it was high time to start leading an entirely new sort of life.

We rented four or five different houses in four years. Each of them was discovered, after a few months, to have some intolerable defect. Secretly, as he admitted to me later, my father had come to the conclusion that it would really be more satisfactory to buy a house in the hills west of Peking, but he wanted to give England every chance. According to my mother, the house in Hertfordshire only lasted longer than the others because it had this shed or barn which was so suitable for housing the War Game.

I had played Germans and English with the tin soldiers for a couple of years when I thought I, too, would like to learn to play the War Game. I was disappointed. Neither my father nor my uncles would teach it to me. They had given up playing it themselves. They said that to learn it now would be not only pointless but actually misleading because very soon now there would be a new war which would make all the strategy, tactics, and rules of the War Game obsolete.

Her Dominion

A Song

Luve cam like the lilt o spring birdsang
In wild aefauld* delirium
Took aa my open saul and nou,
As Dian has imperium
Throu aa the milkie glens
Her firmament,
Luve rides my ruined roads
In hert has her dominion
And I, at last, content.

* Single-hearted

Sydney Goodsir Smith

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A. J. Ayer

Philosophy at Absolute Zero

An Enquiry into the meaning of Nihilism

"A NIHILIST," said Schopenhauer, "is the man who says of the world as it is that it ought not to exist, and of the world as it ought to be, that it does not exist." Let us see how much this comes to. That the world might be better than it is, is a proposition to which most people would unhesitatingly assent. A metaphysician might deny it if he held that the appearance of evil in the world was illusory; or that the real was the rational, in Hegel's peculiar sense of the term; or, following Leibniz, that such evil as existed was a necessary condition of the realisation of the greatest possible amount of good. A very strict determinist might deny it on the ground that since things necessarily are what they are, it is pointless to say that they might be either better or worse. But metaphysical conjuring tricks for making evil vanish have seldom, in the Western world at least, been taken very seriously. And while many people are still inclined to accept determinism, they do not ordinarily carry their belief in it so far as not to admit that there is a perfectly good sense, however hard it may be to analyse, in which things might be other than they are: and, if they might be other than they are, then surely in many instances they might be better than they are. Certainly the view that the world is not all that it should be is common to those whom it is reasonable to describe as nihilists, but no less certainly it is not peculiar to them.

We may, however, interpret Schopenhauer's saying in a way that will bring us somewhat closer to an adequate characterisation of the nihilist. For we may take it as implying that the nihilist's dissatisfaction has for its object not, as is normally the case, some special feature of the world, some particular type or selection of events, but the world as a whole. No doubt he has special reasons for condemning the world, just as one may have special reasons for disliking or condemning a particular person. But just as one may come to dislike not merely the bad or disagreeable qualities in a person, or his ignoble actions, but the person himself considered simply as a person, so the nihilist takes his stand not just against the deficiencies which he finds in the world, but against the world which exhibits them. In the sense in which the celebrated Margaret Fuller declared that she accepted the universe and was ridiculed by Carlyle for saying so ("By gad: she'd better") the nihilist rejects it.

But here it is difficult, for once, not to feel a certain sympathy with Carlyle. How, so long as one continues to live at all, can one possibly do other than accept the universe? Even granted that one has the power to effect changes in it, they can be made only within the framework of its laws. One's own discontent, one's desire to bring about change, the measures that one takes towards this end, are themselves natural facts. The universe is not offered to us for acceptance or rejection: we are already within it. Perhaps suicide can be construed as a rejection of the universe, although it is more properly described as a

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resignation from it, whether voluntary or forced. It is the suicide himself who is rejected, the universe is merely changed by his absence. Nevertheless, as we shall see, the attitude of rejection does find one of its characteristic expressions in suicide. But, short of suicide, it is hard to see what practical form it could be expected to take.

THE answer to this is that it is not in the first instance a practical attitude at all. It is a metaphysical attitude, like any other in which there is a pretence of viewing the universe from the outside as a whole, and being a metaphysical attitude, while it may causally favour certain types of conduct, it is logically consistent with anything whatsoever. But the standpoint of the nihilist is not only metaphysical: it is also fundamentally religious. The underlying assumption is that the world ought to be the work of a divine creator. It is unthinkable that such a God should not be benevolent, not indeed strictly unthinkable, but a thought too intolerable for our acceptance. If there were a God, therefore, the world would contain no evil. But it does contain very much evil. Consequently, there is no God. The salient feature of this argument is the refusal, shared by orthodox Christians, to make the deity responsible for evil. But the nihilist will have none of the orthodox subterfuge by which the creator remains immaculate, taking to himself the credit only for what is good, while the responsibility for evil is thrown upon his creatures. The nihilist has the honesty to recognise that such a God would be a monster; but the conclusion that there is a God, and that he is a monster, is too harsh for him to accept, apart from any logical arguments that might be brought against it. So far then from adopting Voltaire's somewhat superficial view that if there were no God it would be necessary to invent him, he agrees with Stendhal: "The only excuse for God is that he does not exist."

In itself this conclusion is not particularly startling. Even if there were no other grounds for disbelieving in the existence of a benevolent creator, the problem of evil remains a stumbling block to those who are most anxious to believe. The peculiarity of the nihilist is that he takes the non-existence of God as a personal affront. He cannot forgive God for not existing, and he cannot forgive the world for not having been created. And here he claims to speak, not only for himself, but for all human beings. God's failure to exist is a wrong done to the entire human race. But done by whom? Not by God, presumably, since he does not exist. By the world then, for failing to get itself created? But how could it have set about getting itself created, seeing that there is no God? Even granting the personification of Nature, it is surely a little unreasonable to expect her to create a God to be her own creator. Can we say then, that she wrongs us simply in being what she is? If she were different, if she were uniformly kindly, then we should have no grievance, and in that case it would no longer matter whether there was a God or not.

But to the nihilist it would matter. For his dissatisfaction with the world, his sense of being cosmically wronged, comes not only from his viewing it as evil, but also from his viewing it as meaningless. However kindly Nature showed herself to be, it would still be a matter of brute fact that she displayed the characteristics that she did, rather than some others. Her performances could be explained in the sense that they could be fitted into a repeating pattern. They could be explained in the *scientific* sense, in which to give an explanation is, in one form or another, to provide a more general description. But the most general description is still *only* a description. And what is so described remains without meaning. There is still no reason for it all. If God existed, there might be a reason. But God does not exist.

THE view which I am here attributing to the nihilist is very widespread. It is often used by unsophisticated people, and not only by unsophisticated people, as an argument in favour of the existence of a God. The world must have a meaning. But it has a meaning only if a God created it. Therefore,

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there is a God. Among philosophers it strangely unites the existentialists, themselves in many ways akin to nihilists, with the absolute idealists. What is demanded is a logical, as opposed to a merely empirical, reason for things being as they are. The absolute idealists find it, or at least convince themselves that it is to be found, in the logical articulation of their Absolute: the Existentialists, like the nihilists, dramatise its absence; religious people find it, or rather find an assurance of its existence, in the existence of their God.

But it is not merely that there is no logical reason for things being as they are: the point is that there couldn't be. The statement that all statements about matters of fact are contingent is itself necessarily true. Truths of logic are formal; formal truths have no empirical content, propositions with empirical content are not, cannot be, formally true. To lament that contingent propositions are not logically necessary, to try to torture them into becoming so, is an absurdity. If they were logically necessary they would not be the propositions that they are; they would not do the work that they do. Nor is the appeal to a deity anything to the purpose. If there were a God, it would still be a mere matter of fact that he acted in the way that he did. If, *per impossibile*, we were in a position to know what he was about, our explanations of events would take on a new character: they would terminate in descriptions of his intentions. But these again would only be descriptions. They would not be explanations, in the sense required. They would not be logically necessary, for if they were logically necessary they would not fulfil their explanatory function. But, it may be said, just in the case of *these* descriptions, descriptions of the character and intentions of the deity, it would not matter that they were not logically necessary. While being genuinely descriptive, they would at the same time provide us with a reason for everything that they covered. And for themselves no further reason would be required. They would be self-explanatory. But, equally, a scientific explanation, a description of the order of nature, may be allowed to provide us with a reason for everything that it covers; if we find that we cannot explain it in its turn, then we may be content to regard it as self-explanatory. There is as much, or as little, justification for taking this course in the one case as in the other. It is simply a matter of coming to a point where one is satisfied to stop.

There is, indeed, the difference that the religious hypothesis, if it existed, would allow those who accepted it to think of the world not merely as falling into such and such a pattern, but as being consciously planned—a thought which might be a source of satisfaction or, for those who dislike the pattern, of the reverse. But the fact is that we have as yet no such hypothesis. The claim that the universe is planned explains nothing whatsoever, unless it can be stated what the plan is, and how the course of events fits into it rather than some other. Otherwise all that we get, all that we in fact ever do get, in addition to a description of the world, is the empty assurance that it somehow has some meaning, some meaning beyond that which the description of it may be already thought to give. The question then arises whether anything is to be allowed to count as furnishing this further meaning, whether anything is going to count for us as finding it. If nothing is to count, or if what is supposed to count is so defined that it is logically impossible that it should be realised, then the complaint is metaphysical.

Now part of the nihilist's grievance, as I interpret it, is just that the universe is meaningless, in this metaphysical sense. My nihilist is admittedly an abstraction. I am not consciously quoting the views of any historical character, but the position which I am describing is one that I believe to have been at least implicitly held, and held furthermore by many of those who historically count as nihilists. And even if the man I am purporting to describe is wholly a man of straw, the straws themselves are worth examining; for some lives at least have been made to hang upon them. Being metaphysical, then, my nihilist's position is not logically defensible. The practical conclusions which he draws

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from it are mainly arbitrary, but it can be of interest to examine what they are.

"THE world as it ought to be does not exist." And whatever the world were like, it still would not be what it ought to be. It cannot be what it ought to be because there is no God. To go further and say there could not be a God, is to make the tragedy complete and also to expose its emptiness, to show that it is not a tragedy at all. But it does not matter whether or not we make the nihilist take this final step. In either case his grievance is the same. The existence of a godless, meaningless universe is a wrong which is inflicted on him, and one that he has somehow to right. The attempt to right it has various kindred aspects. God must be punished for his failure to exist. The world must be punished for lacking the meaning that it could never logically have had. Since the situation of God is vacant we ourselves must fill it. And the practical consequences are a denial of accepted standards, a value set upon destruction for its own sake, a predilection for the purposeless act, an affirmation of human freedom, measured in terms of power. We shall see presently that when the rebellion is against Hegel rather than against God, that is when the non-existence of a transcendent God is being taken for granted, History comes to be deified in his place, the act of destruction, though still retaining a mystical value of its own, is justified on utilitarian grounds. And this introduction of the utilitarian element mitigates the absurdity of the nihilist's denial of accepted values. For his reason for denying them is then not just that they are arbitrary, but that they are bad.

It is, however, the purer, more metaphysical view that I now wish to consider. Since God does not exist, it is argued, there can be no absolute values, and since there are no absolute values all forms of conduct are legitimate. But seeing that this lack of absolute values is an injury from which we suffer, though all forms of conduct—including those that are socially regarded as the most respectable—are equally legitimate, we have a metaphysical obligation to behave in ways that would not be legitimate if such values did exist: in this way we punish them for not existing, we punish our non-existent God for not sustaining them. I have deliberately presented this view in a way that emphasises its absurdity, but once more it is a view the essential part of which is very widely held. Only here again the argument is more commonly turned the other way. There must be absolute values, it is said, for otherwise there would be no reason for our preferring one course of conduct to another, for approving or condemning anything whatsoever. And there must be a God, for otherwise no values could be absolute. I think it is worth taking a little time to show that both steps in this argument are altogether invalid.

TO BEGIN with the second. It could be the case that belief in the existence of a God was causally necessary to make people behave in ways that were conventionally considered to be right. I take this indeed to be the point of Voltaire's dictum that if God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him; it is the somewhat cynical suggestion that the mass of people can be induced to submit to conventional morality only by the fear of future punishment, or the hope of future reward. I doubt very much myself whether this is true, but it is a matter for sociological investigation. One would have to see whether there was a positive correlation between the fidelity shown by the members of a specimen community to its moral standards and the prevalence among them of religious belief: and, assuming that there were such a correlation, whether or not it was accidental. But, whatever the result of such an investigation, it would have no bearing at all upon the thesis that the maintenance of values, whether absolute or not, *logically* requires the existence of God. For to see that this thesis is false we need only consider what Leibniz, himself a theist, long ago pointed out: that unless one's judgments of value were logically independent of the attribution of any properties to God, the claim that God is good, which is fundamental to the view we are discussing, would itself be without signifi-

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cance. So long as we have some independent criterion for deciding what is good, then those who believe in God, and believe that he is good, may reasonably be grateful that he satisfies it. But if all that were meant by saying of something that it was good was that it was willed by God, then his goodness would be nothing to be grateful for. For to say that he willed only what was good, would then be to express the mere tautology that he willed what he willed. However diabolical his behaviour, it would still by definition be good. That God is good, or that he wills only what is good, may be, for those who can believe in him, a reason, that is to say a motive, for doing what they think they ought: but it cannot be the *ground* for the goodness or badness of what they do. Consequently, even if there were absolute values, their existence would not have the slightest tendency to prove, or indeed to disprove, the existence of God. The two questions are quite independent, and there is no warrant for confusing them.

BUT if the second step of this argument is fallacious, so is the first. Just as it is false that there being absolute values depends upon there being a God, so it is false that unless values are absolute, all conduct is equally legitimate. The doctrine of absolute values, as it figures in this context, is a philosophical thesis, in my view an erroneous philosophical thesis, about the analysis of a certain class of statements, those expressing moral and æsthetic judgments. According to this thesis, these statements are descriptive of a peculiar type of entity, non-natural qualities perhaps —it does not here matter what label we affix to them. Alternative theses are that these statements are descriptive of natural phenomena, such as human attitudes or stages of evolution, or, as I myself hold, that they are not descriptive at all, but function only normatively, somewhat like commands. I shall not elaborate these alternatives, not even the one that I myself think to be true, because I am not now concerned with this particular problem of philosophical analysis. The only point that I now wish to make is that the belief that there are absolute values, that is, the acceptance of this special meta-ethical theory, cannot itself be a reason for doing anything whatsoever. It is common ground among all meta-ethical theories that what is right ought to be done and that what is good should be sought after. For this follows simply from the meaning of the words "right," "ought," and "good," which it is the purpose of such theories to explicate. But if we ask *what* is it, concretely, that we ought to do, *what* is it that is good, the theory of absolute values provides no answer. Nor is this a criticism of it. It is not to be expected that a logical theory about the analysis of moral judgments, even if it were correct as this one is not, should furnish us with practical rules for conduct.

When we seriously consider what we ought to do, we look at the circumstances, work out as best we can what are the likely consequences of various possible courses of action, and then, in accordance with our principles, we take a decision. If we are asked to justify this decision, or the actions to which it leads us, we bring forward the grounds we had for making it. If our principles are questioned, we may defend them by showing how they operate in practice, or by tacitly or explicitly appealing to some further principle. Or we may just reaffirm them. If our questioner is sufficiently persistent it will eventually come to that. It is at this point that the advocate of absolute values puts out his flag. His defence of his principles is that they are true; they are the correct representations of the ethical facts, they correctly picture the non-natural world of values, whereas those who dissent from him are incorrectly picturing it and are so affirming something false. But in saying this he no more justifies his principles than if he were simply content to say, "These are my principles." For the reasons that he has, the only reasons that he can have, for believing that these principles are true, are exactly the same as the reasons that he has for espousing them. And in the case where no further reason is given for espousing a principle, where the principle is left to make its way

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on its merit, then equally no further reason is given for holding it to be true.

But in this second case, it may be objected, there is a further reason; the fact that the upholder of the principle *sees* it to be true. Others may not see it: but this proves no more than that they are morally blind. But either what is here referred to is some state of the speaker, some feeling of conviction, or whatever it may be, which, if it is a reason for supposing the principle to be true, is equally a reason for espousing it without its being labelled as a truth; or else the claim to see that the principle is true is nothing more than a way of pledging one's allegiance to it. There is indeed a problem about the justification of moral judgments; it is the problem of giving an adequate analysis of the ways in which they may legitimately be supported. But towards the solution of *this* problem the doctrine of objective values contributes nothing whatsoever.

This whole question has become unnecessarily confused because it has been assumed that to deny that values are objective, to hold, that is, that value-statements are expressions of attitudes, or directives, or performative statements, rather than statements of fact, is to say, or imply, that morals are unimportant, that it does not really matter what one does, that one is never morally obliged to do any one thing rather than another. But this assumption is quite mistaken. To assert that it does not matter what one does, that what one might take to be one's obligations are not really binding, is itself to take up a moral standpoint—a nihilistic standpoint if you will—which competes, supposing it to be a serious candidate, with other moral standpoints for our allegiance. Neither it, nor indeed any other special moral standpoint, can derive any support whatever from a purely logical doctrine about the analysis of ethical statements. To distinguish value-statements from ordinary factual statements, to maintain that they are not (or that they are) descriptions of non-natural facts, is not to make or imply any suggestion at all about what in any given circumstances one ought to do: and this holds also for the suggestion that there is nothing that one ought to do. The nihilistic doctrine that everything is permitted must make its way on its own merits, if it has any. The logical truth that there are no objective values neither favours it nor makes against it. The two are in no way logically connected.

In recent years much play has been made by existentialist philosophers, revealing here again a nihilistic spirit, with the fact that the adoption of moral or political principles is in the end a matter of personal choice. It is presented as a sign of heroism, or as a mark of our tragic situation in the world, that we have, every one of us, to assume this responsibility. But what is the alternative? With what is this tragic or heroic situation being contrasted? With one in which God or nature furnished us with an authentic set of principles? Principles which would not be elaborated by us, but simply presented *to* us? They would be *there* like our physical environment. But even so we should have to satisfy ourselves that they *were* authentic. However strong the authority behind them, we should still have to recognise it as an authority. And this applies equally when the authority is supposed divine. The devil can quote scripture. However the divinity presents itself, its credentials are still open to question.

Thus, even those who take all their morals or their politics upon trust are still making, however unreflectively, a personal decision. They are making it a principle to do whatever the authority which they accept lays it down that they ought to do. The only contrasting case is that in which there is no occasion for choice. If the possibility of alternative lines of action were never presented to us, if the course of our lives were so determined that the concept of choice or decision had no meaning for us, then there would indeed be no question of our having to assume any responsibility for our manner of life. To some, perhaps, this would appear an enviable condition. Like Walt Whitman they wish they could live as animals—"they are so placid and self-contained, they do not sweat

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and whine about their condition, they do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins, they do not make me sick discussing their duty to God, not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania of owning things, not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago, not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth." Of course, as any naturalist will tell you, it is not true of animals, at least in general, that they are placid and self-contained. "Nature red in tooth and claw" is a far more accurate picture. But Whitman's story might conceivably be true, it might conceivably be a description of our own condition. I do not, however, for my own part regret that this is not so. To this extent I agree with the existentialists. I do attach a value to our having, in some small measure, the governance of ourselves. But to regard this as a piece of heroism on our part is to flatter ourselves unduly. While we do in fact make choices, the fact that we are in a position to make them is not for us a matter of choice; we could not escape it even if we wished. We may indeed delegate the responsibility, but even so we individually bear the responsibility for this delegation, and so for the manner of life to which it commits us. At the same time, it must be conceded that in some societies this responsibility is not so much delegated by the individual as wrested from him. Theoretically it still exists and could not but exist, but in practice it is vanishingly small.

IT WILL be noticed that I am assuming—I am afraid without argument though not I hope without reason—that, in some sense, men are capable of acting freely; an assumption which is not inconsistent with the fact that their actions may be motivated, nor, I think, with the claim that they are causally explicable. Though a belief in free-will is traditionally regarded as excluding the acceptance of determinism, I am myself inclined to hold that they are reconcilable. However this may be, it is certain that we do go through the process of deciding what to do, and the decisions that we come to are at least causal factors in determining how we act. The difficult question, which I shall not here pursue, is how far our choices are themselves conditioned by circumstances which are properly deemed to be beyond our control, and how far their being so conditioned is to be regarded as a limitation of our freedom. A person who holds the prevalent, though probably erroneous, belief that there being any reason for his actions, whether in the form of causes or motives, is a restraint upon him, will tend, if he desires to vindicate his liberty, to act in ways which do not fit in to any familiar pattern, and he will prize above all those actions which have about them the greatest air of spontaneity. This tendency finds its most striking expression in the nihilistic cult of *l'acte gratuit*, an action the whole point of which is that it is completely pointless. If this pointless act is also criminal by ordinary standards, so much the better. The classic case in literature is that of Lafcadio, the hero, if you can call him such, of Gide's *Les Caves du Vatican*, who pushes a stranger out of the window of a train, not because the man in any way annoys him, not having anything to gain by it, but simply to prove to himself that he can, simply in answer to a dare that he issues to himself. A parallel instance from real life might be the case of Leopold and Loeb, two American undergraduates who murdered one of their companions just for the sake of adding murder to the list of their experiences; a less sophisticated performance than Lafcadio's if they were in quest of a new sensation rather than concerned merely with the commission of a motiveless crime, but still sufficiently close.

But why, we may ask, should these pointless acts take the form of crimes? The answer is that anyone who in this way sets himself to contravene accepted standards is in fact displaying his acceptance of them, or at least his recognition of their influence. If one does not think it wrong to kill another human being who has given one no cause for offence, then why should one choose a man to throw out of the window rather than a piece of paper? Why is the commission of an unmotivated, or apparently unmotivated,

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murder any more significant than throwing stones into the sea? We all perform pointless actions, or actions that we take to be pointless (a Freudian might claim that few if any of them really were so), but we do not pay attention to them just because we do take them to be pointless. If there is no white magic then no magic is black. Why should anyone wish to blaspheme the gods, unless they fundamentally believe in them? Prometheus is a hero only in the face of Zeus. There is no heroism in defiance, if there is no one to defy. The point of committing a crime without a motive is that it is a crime.

Consider next Lafcadio's act as an exercise of power. The stranger is treated as an inanimate object. Being taken by surprise, having no possibility of resistance, his life is at that moment subject to Lafcadio's will. But just for this very reason Lafcadio's act is not, in any important sense, an exercise of power. We do indeed speak of acquiring power over nature and take credit to ourselves for it: but this is a metaphor, a matter of endowing nature with the will and the ability to resist us. The problem of discovering how to control inanimate objects frequently presents a challenge: but once the challenge has been met, the manipulation of these objects ceases to be a source of any considerable feeling of aggrandisement. The fascination of power is in its exercise over other human beings, in the subjection of the will of others to one's own. But the very success of this enterprise tends to destroy its point. To the extent that those whom one seeks to dominate allow themselves to be subjected, to the extent that they surrender their wills, they become like inanimate objects; their management is now a mere exercise of skill; there is nothing left to triumph over. What the power-lover seeks is not so much to acquire a stock of faithful instruments, as to dominate another alien power. But the very fact that he does dominate it makes it cease to be an alien power, and so to be worth dominating. Too much, no doubt, can be made of this contradiction. In practice, the subjection of one human being to another is seldom quite complete. But it does perhaps explain the restlessness of the power-seeker, his tendency to push his conquest, to the point of his own overthrow.

It is, I think, no less misguided to look upon the gratuitous act as the paradigm of human freedom. The model is that of the roulette wheel. In Gide's story, Lafcadio is made to decide that if he can count up to twelve before he sees a light outside the train, the stranger shall be allowed to live. He counts up to ten and then he sees a light. I need not have given so rarified an example. It happens to all of us, at one time or another, to decide things by a spin of the coin, or its equivalent, though usually not important things, not things that we much care about. But this submission of ourselves to chance seems to me not an affirmation of our freedom but rather a surrender of it, the abnegation of responsibility. I should suppose that the cases in which we were, whether rightly or wrongly, the most inclined to think of ourselves as free were those in which we did things for a reason, deliberately reviewing all the circumstances, leaving as little as possible to chance. In abandoning oneself to chance, one does make one's behaviour unpredictable, perhaps not unpredictable in principle but at least unpredictable in practice. But the price paid for enthroning chance is that one becomes like a roulette ball. One is the person to whom things happen, the plaything of the fates, surely the antithesis of what is ordinarily meant by being free.

In any case, why should one set store by one's actions being unpredictable? Why should it make us feel uncomfortable, as it does even the most reasonable of us, to think that it would be possible for someone, if only he were clever enough, to forsee everything that we were going to do. Of course we don't, the more normal ones among us, want our behaviour to be wholly unpredictable; we like to be thought reliable, but we wish also to insist that we have the power to surprise if we choose. But to surprise whom? Ourselves? Other people? That is only too easy, so easy that it hardly seems worth pursuing as an end in itself. Even if we concede that all human behaviour, even what seems to be

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the most fortuitous, is predictable in principle (an empty concession), the fact is that we haven't the data, we don't know the laws, or at least we don't know enough of them. Our knowledge is increasing but the range over which we can effectively predict remains comparatively small. And anyhow this is not what is here in question. What we want (irrationally indeed but that does not stop us) is to be able to surprise the most privileged, the very best qualified observer. To surprise God, if he existed. But if he existed, that would by definition be impossible. To surprise nature then, to cheat the fates. But if we can act lawlessly, then that is how nature is arranged; that our behaviour falls into a rigorously causal pattern is no more, and no less, in accordance with nature than its falling into a statistical pattern, however random. Nothing indeed that actually happens can fail to be in accordance with nature. In the same admittedly trivial sense, it is impossible to cheat fate. For of anything that happens it can be said that it was fated to happen. Which shows how pointless it is to talk of fate at all. For if the only criterion that we have for deciding what is fated is what actually happens (and what other criterion could we have?), then prefixing every description of events with "it is fated that" is an idle addition. It tells us nothing more than we already learn from the description of the event.

JUST as it is impossible to act otherwise than in accordance with nature, so it is impossible to act otherwise than in accordance with history. For what history is, is again a matter of what we actually do. It was a peculiarity of Hegel, or at least of Hegel's followers—I am thinking now especially of the Marxists—to look upon history as a deity who could be defied or propitiated, impeded in its work, or given a helping hand. There is an amusing parallel here between Marxism and Calvinism. While both holding that one cannot choose which side to be on, or holding beliefs of which this is the logical consequence (the elect are pre-selected, God has decided once for all from the beginning whether they are to be damned or saved; history assigns us our rôles in its play, our actions are rigorously determined), they also hold that it is our duty to be on the winning side. But they cannot have it both ways. If the sides are already picked once for all and the issues of the game decided in advance, then it is senseless to set about recruiting us. We have only to play our allotted parts. There is, *ex hypothesi*, nothing else that we *can* do. If on the other hand, the sides are not already picked, and the issue of the game not decided, then it is for us to make up our minds what we want to happen. It is not a question of our having to throw in our lot with history (in the sense of pursuing an indicated path—in one sense, as we have seen, it is impossible *not* to conform with history) but of making, or at any rate, striving to make history conform with us. Our powers are limited, individually and collectively. But within these limits it is a tautology to say that history is what we make it.

The peculiarity of the nihilists, who developed in the Hegelian climate, is that they asserted the supremacy of the individual conscience, even the conscience which rejects accepted moral standards, even the conscience which conscientiously suppresses conscience, in the face of the Hegelian God, at the cost, if necessary, of being on the losing side. There is here again the echo of Prometheus. Though the deity is all-powerful, yet will I defy him. But if the deity really is all-powerful, then you cannot defy him, except in the measure that he is willing that you should. What though the struggle nought availeth? The answer is that it may still be worth engaging in, so long as it is at least conceivable that it should succeed. An act of protest has its point, so long as it marks a genuine opposition of wills, however unequal their resources. But the point vanishes when, as in Chesterton's story, it turns out that all the revolutionaries are agents of the police.

THE picture changes once it is admitted that the course of history is not marked out for all time in advance. There is a sense, indeed, in which it is, and must be, marked

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out in advance. It is necessarily true that what will be will be, and if something is going to happen there is nothing anyone can do to prevent its happening, just as if a thing is not going to happen there is nothing anyone can do to bring it about. But this, which may look like a concession to fatalism, is no more than the expression of a harmless analytical truth. By saying that a thing will not happen you rule out the possibility of bringing it about, for if you bring it about then it is not something that won't happen. But this is not to say that the event, considered in itself, is not capable of being prevented or brought about. It is not to say that its happening (if it will happen) or its failing to happen (if it will not) is causally independent of anything that we may now do. From the fact that what will be will be, it does not follow that the future is decided in any more interesting sense than that it will be what it will. It does not follow that future events are causally determined; though it may well be that they are. It does not follow that history works in accordance with anything that it would be reasonable to call a plan.

Recognition of this, combined with a Hegelian reverence for history, gives rise to the conception of a deity whose mind is not irrevocably made up. He can be propitiated, swayed, even induced like a river totally to change his course. Propitiated, it may be, by human sacrifice. Far-fetched as it may seem, I think that this idea played a part in the high-minded violence of the 19th century Russian terrorists. No doubt their motives were to some extent utilitarian. The persons whom they killed were regarded by them as noxious in virtue rather of their functions than of their personal character: but I do not think that this alone is sufficient to account for their behaviour. It seems that they also, or even mainly, regarded assassination as a symbolic act. And this is borne out by their willingness, even eagerness, to sacrifice themselves.

When it comes to nihilism as a political movement, the utilitarian element comes much more strongly into play. Even so it has little affinity with the reformist outlook of the 19th century English utilitarians. What is common to both is the view that the justification of political action is its tendency to produce a better world. What is peculiar to the nihilist is the assumption that the creation of a better world requires a complete break with the past. The necessity for destruction, in order to make room for what will follow, is its justification; but the tendency remains to treat it as an end in itself. At the same time there is an important distinction between the policy of destroying things which are held to be bad, or, if not bad in themselves, at least to be obstacles to good, and the policy of destroying what is there, just because it is there. Such men as Dr. Goebbels seem, in certain moods at least, to have been nihilists in this second sense.

In conclusion, let me repeat that I have not been trying to give an exposition of a coherent system of thought, or even of an incoherent system which any single person has ever held. I do believe that traces of the ideas that I have played with are to be found in the writings of philosophers such as Nietzsche and the existentialists, in some romantic and surrealist poetry, and even in the outlook of the Russian nihilists properly so-called. But mainly I have used the word "nihilism" as a peg on which to hang the discussion of certain questions, which seemed to me interesting in themselves.

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Russia in Flux

I. *Walter Z. Laqueur:* THE "THAW" AND AFTER

IN A recent survey of the state of Soviet literature in *The Times Literary Supplement*, a correspondent reached the conclusion that "if a genius emerged he could now restore to Russian literature its former glory." This is the kind of remark that may give rise to many questions of great speculative interest. But meanwhile life goes on, and literature too, even without geniuses: the Union of Soviet Writers has 3,142 members who are writing poems, novels, and plays. The purpose of the present article is to describe the recent works of some of them and to discuss their significance.

It is now one year since the last Congress of Soviet Writers, and not a few people are wondering what has become of the "thaw" (as Mr. Ilya Ehrenburg put it), the "audacious attempts at a transvaluation of values" (in the words of Mr. Isaac Deutscher). Has the post-Stalinist "ferment of ideas" continued, or has it slowly petered out?

Unfortunately, this very way of putting the question is misleading. The Second Soviet Writers Congress made it quite clear that there would be no quick and major changes; and there have been indeed no great surprises in the literary field since then. Only those will feel disillusioned who were deceived in the first place by the flamboyant and irresponsible jubilation with which many observers welcomed the "thaw." One such observer, for instance, wrote that the Russian intelligentsia had been plunged into a controversy the like of which they had not known for nearly a quarter of a century. But this was a gross exaggeration of what was going on in Russia in 1953–4. Scientists, men of letters, etc., did not at all argue the issues that really preoccupied them; what did happen, and what was novel enough, was that a few daring spirits among them publicly hinted that they would be ready to discuss some of the "safer" of these issues. There was no great, stirring controversy; instead, a most cautious attempt to get some discussion under way. The Second Writers Congress brought clashes between certain personalities (such as Sholokhov and Simonov) who may have represented literary cliques or literary trends; but there was no open conflict of ideas.

And yet, it would be equally wrong to say that Soviet literary development in past months represented "no change" or "back to 1952." If present-day Soviet writing can be compared at all to any previous era, it is the 1938–40 period which comes first to mind. But even that comparison would be superficial in some important respects. For there are new and significant features in the mainstream of Soviet literature in 1955.

There has been one, and only one, discussion on basic issues in the Communist world during the past year. It has taken place, not in Russia, but in China. It was, however, given wide publicity in the Soviet

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Union and its European satellites, and clearly has more than local significance. That is the Hu Feng affair, more dramatically known as "The Case of the Five Daggers."

Hu Feng is—probably one should say was—a leading Chinese literary critic. He became a member of the Communist youth organisation way back in the twenties, but did not remain politically active for very long. In the years that followed, he continued to play a leading rôle in Shanghai left-wing literary circles; and he joined the Communist Party in 1948 or 1949. He enjoyed considerable prestige, both as a leading literary critic and as the star pupil of the late Lu Hsun, the most revered writer in present-day China. He was the spokesman for a group of young writers and critics, some of them Communists, others non-Party men, but all of them in favour of the present régime. Their literary programme reminds one of the Serapion Brothers, a group of Leningrad writers in the early years of the Soviet Union who emphasised the autonomy of art and said in their manifesto that each of them was entitled to his ideology and his political conviction: "We demand only one thing: that the tone be not false."

HU FENG and his friends were extremely distressed by developments on the Chinese literary scene. They were convinced that absolute regimentation of thought under the direction of Kuo Mo Jo, the Chinese cultural commissar, was causing the utter ruin of Chinese literature. They contemplated ways and means of approaching Chou En-lai and the Central Committee of the party, circumventing Kuo Mo Jo who was opposed in principle to any relaxation or liberalisation. In the summer of 1954 they formulated their views in what has now become known as the theory of the "five daggers" that threaten Chinese culture. (It should be stressed, however, that their views have reached us only in the version put out by their adversaries.) The "five daggers" are the following prerequisites: (1) That the revolutionary writer must accept the Communist ideology. (2) That he must "feel his way into" the life of workers, peasants, and soldiers. (3) That he must undergo ideological reform and "re-education." (4) That he is obliged to give his works a form prescribed by the party. (5) That he is bound to work on subjects that have been declared obligatory by the party. Hu Feng also proposed that absolute party control of literary journals and publishing houses should be abolished; "progressive" writers who accepted the Communist régime would be allowed to express their personal opinions in new and independent magazines, on condition that they had something "qualitatively valuable" to say.

Hu Feng and some of his friends met the Presidium of the Chinese Writers and Artists Union last winter and proposed their recommendations. These were not, however, accepted; and Hu Feng's deviation was officially condemned at a session of the presidium executive early in February 1955. At about the same time, a violent press campaign was launched against Hu Feng and his friends, which was not in itself surprising, for his demands had revealed an astonishing naïveté about the limits of cultural freedom in a totalitarian state.

But there was worse to come. Up to May 1955, "Hu Fengism" had been merely a venial, not a mortal sin. But in that month Hu Feng, his friends, and some writers who had not even been his open friends or sympathisers officially became "enemies of the people." On May 13th, the *People's Daily* of Peiping published Hu Feng's recantation and self-criticism. But the same issue carried what were purported to be excerpts from thirty-four of his "letters" over the last twelve years, according to which he had always been an "enemy of the régime and the Chinese people, an agent of Chiang Kai-shek, etc." In the following days, sixty-seven more "letters" were published, written allegedly by his sympathisers who were thus unmasked as "gangsters" and "saboteurs." The *People's Daily* said: "Up to May 13th many people thought that Hu Feng's erroneous ideas had been of an ideological character. . . . They did not realise that it was a thoroughly counter-revolutionary conception. . . . We

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have to increase our vigilance and prevent their attempts at sabotage." A few weeks later a "White Book" was published in more than a million copies, and the campaign to weed out "Hu Fengists" was in full swing. They had poisoned the cattle in the villages, it was said, sabotaged Chinese trade and industry; the "stinking poison of these imperialist spies" had infected some of the students in the universities. "The whole Chinese people was seized by a wave of holy wrath," cabled the Peking correspondent of the Moscow *Literary Gazette*, "the whole people is boiling with rage and demands that this gang of infamous imperialist traitors be punished." As this article is written, the end of the campaign is not yet in sight.

The Hu Feng affair was followed with great interest in the Soviet and satellite press, and Kuo Mo Jo's long and extremely tedious exposés were reprinted in instalments. Typical of satellite comment is the following excerpt from a programmatic article by Jerzy Putrament, a "keynoter" among official Polish theoreticians: "It is interesting to observe that some of Hu Feng's reactionary theories have been in currency in a somewhat different form in our country too. . . . Here and there, under the conditions of increasing pressure by hostile propaganda, the protagonists of bourgeois views exploit every possibility of revenge." The implication of the case for Soviet Europe is, therefore, that however much the party may relax its reins over culture, there are fixed limits that may not be trespassed. The warning is almost certainly superfluous. But that it should be uttered at all is an indication that not everyone is happy over some recent trends in Soviet culture. Let us now examine some of these trends.

Love and sex have been "rediscovered" in the Soviet Union. It is an event that it is only too easy to be ironical about, but one should not underestimate its significance. For more than fifteen years Soviet novels, poems, and plays had been centred on the problems of industrial and agricultural production: they described some Soviet citizen as he was (or rather should have been) at his work. (During the war the scene shifted to the front, but this too was heavy work of a sort.) People were in love, married, and begot children somehow, but these were mere trifles—a premium for hard work in many cases. A Rumanian magazine thus characterised the positive hero of the post-war period in socialist realism: "He has penetrating eyes, flashing with lightning, he is husky, robust, with Herculean chest and muscles, he radiates strength and optimism. He doesn't drink and he may even give up smoking. He repels the allurements of the beautiful sex, is chaste up to the day of his marriage. He will marry a chaste woman, and all their children will also be chaste" (*Viata Romineasca*, March 1954).

SOVIET readers are used to putting up with a great deal, but the suppression of sex in literature was really too much for them. During the "thaw" of 1953–4, Soviet readers and writers reacted fairly sharply against that particular aspect of socialist realism, and this opposition has continued to this day. Addressing movie directors this summer, one official spokesman thought it necessary to advise them that "work does not fill up the life of the people." Sucharevitch, a literary critic writing in *Literaturnaya Gazetta* (August 13th, 1955), asserted that Soviet literature had described all the spheres of human struggle and toil, but "however great an effort we make, we cannot remember any characters in love, with the possible exception of Grigori and Axinia from Sholokhov's *Quiet flows the Don* and a very few others." And Grigori, *horribile dictu*, was a "White Guard"!

After so many years of intense effort and sacrifices, there is an overwhelming longing for more privacy, and the rediscovery of sex is but one aspect (though probably the most important) of this longing. The leaders had to comply, or at least compromise, with this deep urge. Since 1954 most of the published novels prominently feature a love story, side by side with the familiar production angle: some even enthusiastically describe two, three, or more love stories.

It was comparatively easy to ridicule the

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Stakhanovist-marries-shock worker books of the last fifteen years; but it has been far more difficult to improve things. Soviet writers (with a few exceptions belonging to the older generation) had simply never written on love and sex. They did not know how to approach their subject. Their first steps in the new direction were very unsteady and frequently slightly comic. There was also an additional difficulty: Russian classical literature on the whole lacks any tradition of writing about physical love. *Anna Karenina* is a novel about adultery, to be sure, but intimacies are only seldom described, and anything pertaining to the physical act is never mentioned. A change came only after the turn of the century, when various modernist schools spread in Russia, and the first "discovery of sex" in Russian literature coincided with the prevalence of *décadent* trends: Mikhail Kuzmin, Anastasia Verbitzkaya, and—most notorious of all—Artzybashev's *Sanin* (1907). All of these are, of course, utterly outside the Soviet pale from a political point of view. There was no naturalist school in Russia in the late 19th century which could have suggested to Soviet writers that a frank discussion of sex could be connected with "progressive" politics. To be sure, there was always Maxim Gorki—but it is quite unthinkable that any Soviet novelist should write today as freely on the facts of life among the poor and the outcast as did Gorki (especially the young Gorki). And so the Soviet writers move quite awkwardly—the women writers, as is usual in matters sexual, are less self-conscious than the men—not unlike people who have not seen the sun for a long time and have to get slowly accustomed to the brightness of the light.

TAKE, for instance, the new novel by V. Ashayev, whose *Far from Moscow* was the big success of the post-war period. Tanya loves Mikhail and the two walk for many hours through Moscow at night. At last they retire to the flat of Tanya's parents who are at present staying at their *dacha* outside the city. Both are too excited to sleep and the author prepares us for the worst. But then, all of a sudden, Tanya gets a nettle rash and Mikhail has to rub her legs with alcohol. This again makes them excited, they forget the nettles and the rash. Mikhail holds the girl in his arms, kisses her lips, eyes, and shoulders. Their hot breaths meet. "Mikhail, we are alone in the house," Tanya says desperately and urgently. "My parents are in the *dacha*. I do not want to do this to them. I am afraid for our love." But Mikhail is up to the situation. He feels a burning choke in his throat. With a radiant smile he lays Tanya in her bed like a small child. Mikhail spends the rest of the night in an imaginary discussion with Tanya's father, a learned palæontologist, who argues that his daughter is too young to marry. And that's that.

Yelena, by K. Lwowa, is probably the most discussed Soviet novel of the year. Yelena is a scientist who is married; she also has a lover. At the moment when she has to choose between lover and husband, she is spared by being transferred to some remote part of the Soviet Union. When expecting a child from her lover she has a road accident, another *deus ex machina* that eliminates a difficult dilemma. After all this, Yelena nevertheless emerges as a "positive hero" and it is not surprising that the author was violently attacked by the Komsomol newspaper for "glorifying moral corruption." But she has also found supporters, which is rather more surprising and interesting. Another interesting deviation from moral standards hitherto obligatory is found in Pistolenko's *The Love of Anna Berezko*, performed recently at the Moscow Dramatic (Stanislavsky) Theatre. Hitherto, divorce was most actively discouraged in Soviet literature. But when Anna Berezko divorces her husband, a generally worthless character, she (and Pistolenko have all Soviet critics with them, though Anna's husband—the headmaster of a school in Siberia—has not committed a single crime in the Soviet calendar that would, in previous years, have justified separation.

While Ashayev's and Lwowa's novels had a mixed reception, Daniel Granin's *Those Who Seek* has been acclaimed as one of the best books of the past year. It describes, among other things, the affair of Andrei

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Lobanov, an engineer, with Rita, a married woman. By Soviet standards it is quite risqué —not the subject as such but Granin's treatment. "Rita moved towards him, but he drew away, demanding an answer. He felt the pain he caused her by his rebuff. . . . 'I need you, I need you always, but I can't go on like this. This room . . . your friend. . . . Can't you yourself see how sordid it all is?' Rita lay back on the bed and placed her hands behind her head. Her small breasts were clearly outlined under the blouse. Again she sighed wistfully. 'How ungrateful of you. Come to me. Come, dear. . . . What are you afraid of in me? . . .' He tried not to look at her unbuttoned blouse, at her long, finely-shaped legs. . . ." But in the end Andrei finds the inner strength to put an end to that sordid affair and virtue is suitably rewarded by the author.

HOWEVER, virtue is not always rewarded in recent Soviet novels. Andrei, in Yelena Katerli's *Long Road*, is a nice chap, a good Communist, a competent editor of the local newspaper. And yet Lyuba, the girl he loves, marries somebody else and there is no consolation for Andrei but work. The book ends: "As Andrei walked along the street he thought about the things he had to do. To set about editing *Tribuna* properly. Recently he had worked without enthusiasm, the last issue was dull." There is no consolation either for Antonina in the same novel, who loves Yasha, a young rascal, and even has a child by him. Yasha belongs to the "*stilyagi*," the Soviet *jeunesse dorée*, who dress smartly, smell of eau de cologne, drink heavily, and prefer the fox-trot to the polka: "The polka is only for the nursery."

It is still a far cry from the Soviet literature of the 1920's—and especially those books that describe the life of adolescents, such as *Kostya Ryabtsev* or *Without Cherry Blossoms*—to the present relaxation from prudery. Nor should one expect a return to the spirit of frankness and experimentation of those days. The present relaxation may well constitute the absolute limit for years to come. Nevertheless, its importance can be underrated. The reaction to decades of collectivisation of private life seems to be in full swing in the Soviet Union, and the literary stirrings are but a faint reflection of it. People outside a totalitarian régime too easily forget that love and sex are "discouraged" there because they impede the atomisation of society. They are, in an indirect fashion but quite literally, "enemies of the régime." When attention is paid to love and sex, individuals become important—even the inner lives of individuals. In the long run, the rediscovery of love and sex in the Soviet Union in 1954–5 may well enter history as an event more important than —well, even the Geneva Conference.

A recent issue of a Soviet literary monthly contained selections from the writings of Ivan Bunin, the only Russian ever to have received the Nobel Prize for literature. Bunin left Russia in 1918 and France in 1954. The Soviet editors, in a short introduction, observed that Bunin had never understood the Communist revolution and that his political views and writings were unworthy of him. But they did go ahead to print him, and the very appearance of an émigré writer in a leading Soviet magazine throws some fresh light on the state of mind of those who are now setting the direction of Soviet literature.

The Soviet attitude to émigré writers, as to "doubtful characters" in Russian literary history in general, has not been consistent. Broadly speaking, it can be said that more cultural latitude is given to the publishing houses whenever a more liberal political line prevails, as in 1934–5 and 1942–5. During the Second World War, novels by Dostoievsky and Leskov were freely published. After 1946 such publication ceased and the literary critics again attacked the "reactionary and confused character" of Dostoievsky's writings. After Stalin's death, Dostoievsky reappeared in the form of *The Village Stepantikovo and its Inhabitants*, a minor but vivid novel. And this past July, an edition of *Crime and Punishment* came out, the first in many years. (Raskolnikov is probably the limit: it would doubtless be presumptuous to wait for Ivan Karamazov too). Also republished were some of the minor writers of the 1870's and '80's,

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such as Pomyalovsky (a man who drank too much and described mainly the goings-on in Orthodox seminaries), and the writings of some of the "reactionaries" of the '60's such as the Aksakov brothers.

The same vacillations can be noted *vis-à-vis* writers and books of the earlier periods of Soviet literature. Perhaps most typical of the fate of such literature is Mikhail Bulgakov's play, *The Days of the Turbins*, which is based on a novel by the same writer written back in 1924. The scene is in the Ukraine in 1918. The Turbin brothers are officers in the White armies during the Civil War. Yet both are "positive heroes" in the modern Soviet sense and there is not a single Communist in the whole play. In the end, the Turbin brothers do change sides: they have become convinced that, as Russian patriots, they have to support the Communists, not the various Ukrainian atamans, because only the former stand for Russian unity. Their conversion is for exclusively national reasons, not because they have accepted Communist ideology. *The Days of the Turbins* (which, incidentally, includes a playing of "God save the Czar") was a big success in Moscow in the late twenties, but was soon forbidden. The play was again permitted for a short time in the early thirties, but was once more banned after about a year. For the last twenty years or so, *The Days of the Turbins* has not been performed, nor has its author (who died in 1936) been mentioned in the Soviet press. At the Writers Congress last winter, however, Veniamin Kaverin, a Soviet writer of the older generation, suggested a new performance of the play, and according to a recent report it is included among the repertoire of a leading Moscow theatre. It should be stressed that Dostoievsky or Bulgakov are "border-line" cases for the Communists; not a single major Soviet writer who fell victim to the big purges (e.g. Pilnyak or Babel) has been posthumously rehabilitated.

For the pre-revolutionary literary heritage, we have now a fairly accurate up-to-date yardstick of Soviet opinion. It is the tenth volume of the *History of Russian Literature*, published by the Academy of Sciences some months ago. A big, exquisitely produced volume, it deals with the period most interesting in this context: 1890–1917. About half of this great volume (more than 800 pages) deals with Gorki, Gorki's pupils, and Lenin's influence on Russian literature. (Gorki is described as a disciple of Lenin who occasionally strayed from the ideological instructions given by the master.) Stalin and Zhdanov are quoted time and again as final arbiters; Mayakovsky owes his place in this history to a chance remark by Stalin, while Plekhanov survives — despite his unsavoury political record, from the Communist point of view— because he received a good notice in Zhdanov's famous speech in 1946. Some of the exceedingly third-rate writers of the time who later became Communists are inflated out of all measure and made into leading literary figures. (Or perhaps they are not really overrated but have simply to be played up because the Bolsheviks had so few sympathisers among the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia.) As for party affiliations, it seems roughly to be the case that the Soviet editors prefer members or sympathisers of bourgeois parties to Social Revolutionaries, and social revolutionaries to Mensheviks.

But what is perhaps most significant in this book is the attempt, by fair means and foul, to adopt all the major pre-revolutionary realistic writers, regardless of their political orientation. A whole chapter is dedicated to Bunin (but only ten lines to his many works after 1917, thereby omitting to mention some of his most important writings); for Bunin, after all, is the greatest of those writing in the classical tradition of Tolstoy and Dostoievsky. In a sense, Bunin is nearer to socialist realism than Gorki, especially the early impressionist and violent Gorki. The volume of the *History* is full of crying injustices and distortions. But somehow or other, often with considerable ingenuity, the editors do succeed in laying claim to most of the important writers of the Russian and Soviet past. If the writer in question was an incorrigible individualist, far removed from the social and intellectual

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currents of his day, he can now be safely described as a "great Russian patriot." Usually, one can also find in his lifetime some form of mild protest, even if only once or twice, against the powers-that-be, which can now be emphasised as an indication of how the spirit of progress permeated that particular writer. In any case, whatever the reasons, most of the great Russian writers are thus saved for Communist posterity. (In poetry, the situation is very different, and everything too difficult for the more intelligent pupils in the upper forms of the secondary schools is out.)

This sometimes ludicrous effort to appropriate as much as possible from the Russian literary heritage will probably have beneficial effects in the long run. It means that certain standards of creativity are preserved; and, further, there cannot be the slightest doubt that the books of the great Russian writers of the 19th century are some kind of an antidote to totalitarian ideology. The Soviet reader will tend to compare Soviet literary output of the present day with the great chain of literature from Pushkin to Chekhov and Gorki, and this is bound to raise questions in their minds. And it is not utopian to hope that these questions will be asked each year with an ever greater emphasis.

It is too early to find any coherent pattern of basic change in the Soviet literature of 1955. Most writers have taken little notice, so far, of the changes in the official line and go on writing as they did a year ago—or fifteen years ago. It is a good sign, however, that new writers are appearing on the literary scene and that two new monthly magazines had to be started this year to find space for the newcomers. In July 1955 the first issue of another new monthly appeared, *Inostrannaya Literatura*—"Foreign Literature." (There was a similar magazine, *International Literature*, which came to an unlamented end during the early years of the Second World War.) On the face of it, the creation of such a magazine is a good sign, since it expresses an interest in what is being written outside Russia. The first issue was not very promising, consisting mainly of a collection of articles by well-known Communist writers and fellow-travellers, such as Anna Seghers, Roger Vaillant, Jean-Paul Sartre, James Aldridge, etc., and there was only one contributor (Archibald Macleish) outside that well-defined circle. The second issue which has just reached us is more interesting. The highlight is a letter to the editors, signed by Mikhail Sholokhov, stressing that the Soviet government has always stood for international cultural collaboration. Let bygones be bygones, he goes on to say. The new journal should publish "everything that is talented, that helps people to live a life worthy of human beings." And he invites the writers of the whole world to comment on his proposal. Now this is a very heartening symptom. But what makes it so difficult to estimate its significance is the fact that the very same issue of *Foreign Literature* carries an article by Mao Tun headed "The views of Hu Feng on Literature and the arts should be unmasked, consistently and in all fields." This article, written in the true Zhdanov spirit, makes it as the first point in the indictment against Hu Feng "that he thought that it was not necessary for a writer to have a progressive, Communist Weltanschauung."

The situation is much the same in the other Soviet arts. There are encouraging signs but they do not add up to much, and one is left wondering whether they are really signs of progress or merely symptoms of a new stage of inertia.

The Soviet movie industry has now recovered from the acute crisis of 1950–2. In 1951, the worst year, exactly nine films were released, in comparison with more than one hundred and fifty back in 1935. In 1955, a total of sixty new Soviet movies are scheduled to be shown. The crisis of 1950–2 was the direct outcome of the *Zhdanovtchina* in the field of movies. After 1953 there was some relaxation and scenario writers took out of their trunks (as they openly admitted) all kinds of scenarios written over the last twenty years. Some of these movies are gently critical of some aspects of society, but most avoid anything even quasi-political like the plague.

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As a result one meets the following complaints in the Soviet press: Among the sixty feature-length films to be released in 1955 there is not one about working-class life. Only two deal with the efforts of the Soviet people to carry out the party line in agriculture. For the last two years there has been not a single good film about the struggle of the progressive-forces-of-world-peace against the warmongers. The average Soviet film takes eleven months to make, the major films of 1954–5 took up to two years; pointing to film production in the capitalist world, the Soviet press demands that this period be cut by two-thirds.

But, on the whole, the Soviet authorities are satisfied with the progress made by their movie industry, and there can be no doubt that there has been indeed a certain improvement. There are built-in limits to this process, however, and one can observe them by reading the recent official prescription on how to create a comedy. The major purpose of Soviet film comedy, one is given to understand, is to ridicule all that is old and conservative, which impedes the forward movement of society. In "bourgeois" comic films, the main heroes are, as a rule, eccentric people of a strange behaviour and character. The heroes of the Soviet comedy, on the other hand, must be genuine heroes, for these pieces have not only to attack the "remnants of the past" but also poetically to describe the new and progressive in Soviet society. An Aristophanes would find it difficult to go on writing in these conditions, and the Soviet film maker is not (no more than is his counterpart in the West) an Aristophanes.

PAINTING and sculpture were in a bad way even before Zhdanov came along and the 1946 reforms just about finished off Soviet painting for the time being. The official school of Gerassimov, Johanson, Nalbandyan, *et al.* went on to compete unsuccessfully with Soviet colour photography. The proceedings of the fifth session of the Academy of Arts, which was convened shortly after Stalin's death, still makes sad reading; but since then there has been some improvement. The change is perhaps above all marked in the different subjects chosen by the artists. The outstanding pictures of the Zhdanov period were "Lenin Speaks on the Third Congress of the Komsomol," "Stalin Visits the Battleship Molotov," "The Triumph of the Victorious Fatherland," "Lenin and Stalin in the Headquarters for the Defence of Petrograd." Last year, the pictures singled out for praise in the All-Union Exhibition were "Sashka the Tractorist," "Work on the Road," "Portrait of the Surgeon S. D. Popov," as well as half a dozen depicting the "Awakening Steppe" and the agricultural resettlement schemes in Soviet Asia. This year the following outstanding pictures from the annual exhibition are reproduced in the Soviet magazines: "Holiday," "After Work" (girls bathing in a river), "The Farewell" (a young man and his girl take leave of each other on the platform of a railway station), and so on. The "after work," privacy theme has emerged at last, paralleling the trend in Soviet writing.

If there has been a change for the better insofar as the subjects are concerned, there has been no such change with regard to approach and style. "Formalism, naturalism, impressionism" are still considered deadly sins; so is any form of modernism and deviation from the neo-classicist academic style. But it may be interesting to note that the few transgressors from the golden rules of socialist realism have been enjoying a tremendous popularity. This goes in particular for the sculptor Stepan Ersya, a Ukrainian and a former emigrant who returned to the Soviet Union only in the early fifties. His works were condemned as "decadent modernism," "lacking national spirit," "ugly," and so on; but *Iskusstvo*, organ of the Soviet Artist's Union, admitted at the same time that Soviet youth was showing a great and unhealthy interest in the work of Ersya.

ONE need not be a Marxist to regard the present unsettled state of the Soviet arts as a reflection of the state of Soviet society in 1955. Somehow it has been realised that, with Stalin's death, an epoch has come to an

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end, but it is not yet at all clear what the new era will be like, and whether it will be so very different from the old. There may be important new departures in the working habits of the Politburo or the foreign policy of the Kremlin, but these changes are responses to political exigencies. No such external compulsions exist in the cultural field, and the present pattern may well continue for years—perhaps for many years. There have been some interesting new phenomena, especially the emphasis on private lives and the "rediscovery" of love. The vision of a "ferment of ideas," of a basic change in the quality of Soviet life need not necessarily be a *fata morgana*. But if one hopes that the vision will come true one day, there is no reason on the basis of the evidence available to place that day in the immediate future.

II. *Richard Lowenthal:* PEACE AND MR. KHRUSHCHEV

THE relief with which the outcome of the Geneva conference of heads of governments has been widely welcomed in Western countries is out of all proportion to its real achievements—just as the widespread fear of a nuclear world war which preceded it was out of all proportion to the real danger of such a war. Both the war-scare of yesterday and the peace-scare of today spring from the same unwillingness to face the real perils and burdens of "co-existence" over a long period with the Communist powers. Both are not rational responses to a difficult and complex reality, but emotional escapes from it. Those who were in the grip of the former delusion distorted the whole character of the political struggle between the Soviet bloc and the Western world by viewing it in purely military terms, until preventive war or meek surrender appeared to them as the only alternatives for Western action; the same panicky misreading of the nature of the struggle underlay the attitude of the quasi-pacifists who regarded every supporter of NATO as a warmonger, and that of the McCarthyite who saw in every Liberal a traitor. Now, on the rebound, a welcome reduction in military tension is hailed as if it already meant the impending end of the political conflict, and we are presented with another false alternative. The West, we are told, has the choice between accepting peace on the basis of the status quo, the existing territorial division between the two systems, or "continuing the cold war," which is interpreted to mean a return to our former state of anxiety with the ultimate risk of nuclear world war.

These are, of course, precisely the terms in which the Communist powers wish us to see the situation; but a number of statements by Western political leaders have helped to create the impression of a miraculous transformation, if only because their authors wished to claim the credit for having worked the miracle. The result is that even Western political analysts of undoubted integrity are beginning to talk as if the Great Powers had not only recognised the suicidal absurdity of nuclear world war, but were on the point of renouncing the use of force as a means of policy altogether. Power politics, so we are given to understand, have reached a dead end; alliances have become meaningless nuisances; and in the political game according to the new rules there will no longer be any means of pressing effectively for a change in the spheres of influence of the great states. A millennium of stability—or should we say of stagnation?—is at hand. It sounds wonderful; but it simply is not true.

ANY attempt to disentangle the real causes of the international détente and to clarify the conditions of long-term co-existence in a divided world—which is another way of referring to the forms of long-term conflict between "ideological blocs"—must, I believe, start from the statement that neither the Soviet nor the American govern-

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ment has at any time been willing to embark on an aggressive world war.

In the case of the United States, this statement may need little justification for a Western audience. We are familiar with the reasons why no democratic government can afford to plan a policy of aggression, least of all a government subject to the restraints of the American constitution. We have the record of the avoidance of aggressive action, in the face of great and growing provocation, at a time when the United States still possessed a monopoly of nuclear weapons. Finally, the very point most frequently made by those who complain of American aggressiveness—the reckless speeches by the advocates of "preventive war," including some influential figures in Congress and the Administration—proves on analysis that this "war-party" behaved as a self-conscious minority group, publicly dissenting from official policy in an unsuccessful effort to increase its following.

The Soviet government, on the other hand, has undoubtedly pursued an aggressive expansionist policy during the post-war period; but it was always a policy of limited risks. It has turned the temporary military control of Eastern Europe, which resulted from the share of the Russian armies in the destruction of Hitler's Reich, into permanent political domination by forcibly imposing the rule of Communist parties under Russian-trained leaders throughout the area. As late as 1948–9, it tried further to extend its European dominion by all pressure short of war, as shown by the Berlin blockade, the threats and boycott against Yugoslavia, and the support of Communist guerilla activity in Greece. But in each of these cases, as in that of the "autonomous" government imposed on Persian Azerbaijan during the Russian post-war occupation, the Soviets recoiled before the risk of actual war. The one clear case of open military aggression across a frontier started on Russian orders, the invasion of South Korea, was obviously based on the mistaken calculation that the United States was not prepared to come to the aid of this exposed outpost; as soon as the error became apparent, the Soviets were careful to keep the war localised.

Nor is this policy of limited risk surprising in the light of Russian self-interest and Communist doctrine. The Communists are convinced that their system of single-party rule, with its complete monopoly of organisation and propaganda, is the only sure method of social progress, the only way out of the "contradictions" of the capitalist world, and they regard the gulf between their own "camp" and that of the "capitalist" states—in which they include all those countries moving towards socialism by democratic methods—as unbridgeable. But they also feel certain that the contradictions of capitalism—its class conflicts, its colonial troubles, its national antagonisms—will produce ever new revolutionary crises and internal wars, and hence ever new opportunities for expanding their own camp by subversion or annexation without risking all their previous gains in a gambler's throw. With this picture of the world, they must naturally fear that sooner or later the "class enemy" will try to band together and form an alliance for their annihilation, and must prepare for this eventuality; but they must also hope that they will be able to postpone this ultimate clash until it is too late for their enemies, and must devote their diplomatic efforts to dividing and, if necessary, even appeasing them. Thus, periods of revolution and local aggression have alternated with periods of "peaceful coexistence" in Soviet foreign policy from Lenin's time to this day: Hitler-like plans for winning world domination at a single stroke have had no place in it.

But while a sober analysis gives good grounds for thinking that neither of the Great Powers was at any time willing to embark on aggressive world war, there is equally good reason to think that each of them had recently come to believe that the other harboured such intentions. In the United States, that belief arose from the aggressive Russian post-war policy we have described, from the Russian refusal to demobilise at the same time as the Western powers, and from the diplomacy of threats

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based on the great local military superiority thus secured by the Soviets in critical areas; it seemed finally confirmed by the invasion of South Korea. In the Soviet Union, the corresponding belief about American intentions arose from the counter-measures this policy provoked, beginning in the spring of 1947 with the proclamation of the "Truman doctrine" for Greece and Turkey, and continuing with the North Atlantic Pact and the creation of a world-wide chain of American bases; it seemed finally confirmed in Soviet eyes when, after the outbreak of the Korean war, the United States began to press for the rearmament of Western Germany.

In the United States, this fear was responsible for a growing tendency to consider the whole political problem of the struggle against totalitarian Communism from a one-sided military angle; in the Soviet Union, it was probably the main factor which caused Stalin to embark on a feverish armaments race at a time when he had already realised that further advances in Europe were impossible without war. Finally, in this atmosphere of military hypertension the solution of the unsolved diplomatic problems between the two blocs proved impossible; and the pressure of unsolved problems combined with the armaments race to keep alive the fear of world war.

This vicious circle was finally broken by a combination of two factors. One of them was the possession of the H-bomb by both sides and the full realisation of its destructive potentialities; the other was the pressure of internal, chiefly economic, factors within the Soviet bloc.

THE emancipation of Soviet foreign policy from the spectre of impending American aggression probably dates from the explosion of a thermo-nuclear device by the Soviet government in August 1953. Then, if not before, the Russian leaders acquired the conviction that no conceivable American government would be sufficiently mad deliberately to embark on world war, and the confidence that a policy of "peaceful co-existence" could be pursued with a real prospect of success. The converse conviction, that the Soviet leaders were no suicidal maniacs either, began to spread in the United States in the course of 1954, as the implications of the Bikini explosion of the spring of that year came to be realised. The essence of the new mutual realisation that "safety will be the sturdy child of terror" was formulated by Sir Winston Churchill long before it was sanctioned by the smiles and handshakes of Geneva.

The new "safety", however, does not mean that the powers no longer need to guard against world war, but that they are in a position to do so effectively. It means, not that deterrence has become unnecessary, but that it has become possible—because both sides hold weapons capable of inflicting crippling or even total destruction on a hostile power, but not capable of doing so quickly enough to avoid the risk of equally crippling retaliation. The nuclear stalemate is not the peace that passes understanding—it is the latest, highly precarious, form of a balance of power. Hence its acceptance goes with a growing recognition that, while a limitation of further stockpiling of nuclear weapons may be possible, a total ban based on their destruction is not only technically impossible to enforce but even politically undesirable. As the world's leading scientists have recognised, it has become more practicable to outlaw world war than to outlaw the use of H-bombs in a world war.

Nor would the end of the mutual fear of world war by itself eliminate the risk of the kind of wars that the "two camps" have actually fought so far, i.e. local wars and civil wars—not even of local wars involving the use of tactical atomic weapons. If in fact the danger of local aggression and the use of military threats as a means of diplomacy have steadily diminished in recent years, the primary reason must be found in a change of Soviet strategy which is largely independent of the nuclear stalemate, and of which the first signs actually began to appear before the arrival of the latter.

As early as the autumn of 1952, in Stalin's last pamphlet and his wind-up speech at the

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nineteenth congress of the Soviet Communist Party, there had been indications that the Soviet government was wondering whether the hypothetical danger of American aggression could not be met more effectively by a policy of "peaceful co-existence" than by a rigid refusal to consider any compromise for the settling of local conflicts. That first beginning of a thaw in Soviet foreign policy gave way once more to the paranoiac vigilance campaign during the last months of Stalin's life; but a new course was set immediately after Stalin's death with the Korean armistice. Since then, the Soviet effort to end the remaining local wars, to stop the armaments race, and to reduce military tension has gone on, with occasional setbacks but on the whole continuously, before and after Beria's fall, and after as before Malenkov's resignation. Clearly, it is due to factors more permanent and compelling than the changing groupings and concepts of Stalin's competing heirs.

I BELIEVE that the most important among these factors is that the Soviet economy has reached a critical stage of development at which the strain of the armaments race is felt much more seriously than before. Not that the crisis of Soviet and satellite agriculture was particularly desperate in a short-term sense—the people of Russia, with all their difficulties, are much better off than immediately after the war. But the Soviet economy has reached the stage of industrial maturity at which it becomes physically impossible to maintain the pace of industrial investment set in the age of "primitive accumulation."

The reason is that in the Soviet economy for twenty years, and in most of the European satellites for five years, industrial expansion could rely for its labour force not only on the natural increase of the urban population, but on a huge agricultural over-population. While this was true, the pace of investment was limited only by the limits of exploitation, i.e. by the very low minimum standard which even a totalitarian dictatorship with a large reserve army of slave labour has to grant its "free" workers and peasants. The sudden focussing of attention on the troubles of Soviet and satellite agriculture since 1953 expresses the fact that the agricultural over-population has now been absorbed—in fact, more people had been transferred to industry than agriculture could afford to lose, and a partial reversal had to take place. That may seem absurd if we remember the recent observation of American experts on the waste of man-power on Russian state or collective farms; but this man-power, "wasted" by American standards, is indispensable on the present Russian level of productivity. In other words, the stage has been reached where the further growth of production depends in Russia, just as in advanced Western countries, chiefly on the increase of productivity in both agriculture and industry itself; and while the Soviet system is greatly "superior" to Western society in its high rate of exploitation of the worker, thanks to the absence of independent trade unions, individual rights, and democratic controls, it has so far proved greatly inferior in promoting productivity and quality of output, owing to the drawbacks of detailed administrative planning from the centre, of the Soviet type of "socialist emulation," and of agricultural collectivisation.

The result of reaching that stage in development is not an acute crisis, but a compulsion to slow down, which makes the burden of the arms race more difficult to bear; and this slow-down has become necessary at a time when the death of Stalin and the weakening of the secret police by the internal struggle among his heirs have exposed the as yet untried authority of these heirs to more effective pressure from below in favour of a higher standard of living. In other words, the Soviet leaders, while by no means threatened with economic collapse and therefore by no means forced either to escape into war or suddenly to surrender to all Western demands, are under effective long-term economic pressure to end the armaments race and to reduce the military tension they have created by their post-war aggressions and threats; and they know it.

Of course, the West, too, is under economic and psychological pressure to end

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the armaments race; and the pressure on both sides to reduce conventional forces and armaments is all the greater because both know that under the nuclear stalemate the heavy expenditure needed to perfect the means of delivering atomic weapons and the defences against them must go on. But we have put the emphasis on the factors causing a change on the Russian side for two reasons—because only they could take the initiative in reducing the tension they created, and because the economic pressure on them is actually more serious.

The Soviet leaders, then, have a genuine desire to stop aggressive expansion for a possibly long period, to consolidate their gains, and to reduce the arms burden by agreement. They have shown the seriousness of this desire by their signing of the Austrian peace treaty, their settlement with Yugoslavia, their abandonment of insincere propaganda slogans for disarmament in favour of a search for practicable proposals, and generally by renouncing the diplomacy of military threats. Together with the realisation of the nuclear stalemate, this change of Soviet policy has transformed the international atmosphere and greatly reduced the fear of war throughout the world. Is it sufficient, then, to "end the cold war"? Can we now—for that is the meaning of that phrase—return to a situation like that of the 1920's, when the Soviet system existed side by side with the capitalist powers, trading with them and proclaiming its ideological hostility at the same time, without anybody worrying much about it?

One thing is still missing for this comparatively happy ending—an agreed solution of the hitherto unsolved territorial problems between the "two camps." But the moment that question is mentioned, we are at once reminded of the one overwhelming difference between co-existence in the 1920's and "co-existence" now: that we are now faced, not with an isolated Soviet Russia, but with a Soviet bloc, comprising Communist China, Viet Nam, and North Korea as well as the Soviet satellite empire in Eastern Europe. That bloc, if acting under unified leadership, is a potential contender for supreme world power—as isolated Russia was not. Hence, any territorial settlement which is to endure for a long period—any settlement under which the West could consent to disarmament and disengagement of conventional forces, in full knowledge that one day Communist aggression may be resumed—raises the question of the balance of world power. In particular, a settlement for Europe raises the question of the balance of Communist and non-Communist power in Europe.

That does not mean that we are thinking of a possible period of peaceful co-existence in the same—largely military—terms as of the cold war. A balance of power means different things in different conditions. What counts in times of military tension is *ready*, military power in disputed areas; what counts in long periods of peace is *potential* power in a given region. In the former, one needs automatic alliances with a joint command; in the latter, friendships founded on common interests and affinities may ultimately become sufficient. But the calculation of potential power can never be absent from a peace settlement between blocs whose fundamentally conflicting aims and interests remain unresolved.

NATURALLY, the Soviet government is seeking to end the cold war on the most favourable territorial basis it can hope to obtain—on the basis of the status quo. In Europe, which alone is the subject of the present round of four-power negotiations, this demand takes the form of the proposal for a European security pact which would guarantee the survival of the Communist satellite régimes, imposed on the peoples of Eastern Europe and Eastern Germany against their will. There are, of course, many people in the West who find this idea morally repugnant; but not a few of them feel that it may ultimately have to be accepted on realistic grounds, as the price of peace. Yet a glance at the map should be sufficient to convince anybody that the present partition of Europe is not a realistic basis for a lasting peace for two reasons: because it tends to sanction a permanent preponderance of Communist power in Europe, and because the partition of Germany will prove untenable once the major

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powers disengage their forces from the centre of the Continent.

It is anything but realistic to believe that the American and Russian troops, or even the Americans alone, would stay in the centre of Europe during a prolonged period of peace; in any real advance towards disarmament and a *détente*, the forward units of the two world powers would be the first to be withdrawn. That would leave two armed and sovereign Germanies to grapple with the problem of national unity; and the larger, Western part would either have to swallow the conditions of the Communist dictatorship for a "compromise régime" heavily infiltrated at birth, or to embark on the mad adventure of a "national" war. The third possibility—that of assuring the internal freedom of a unified Germany by a compromise with Russia on its international status—would no longer exist.

But even assuming that the partition of Germany would outlast the withdrawal of the victorious powers of Hitler's war, such a withdrawal would leave the European continent in the grip of an overwhelming preponderance of the Communist bloc. Conversely, if Germany were reunited in freedom, a balance could develop in due course which would be independent of the presence of American ground troops; while the presence of American air bases in Western Europe—the practical proof of the reality of the North Atlantic Pact—would be required for maintaining an effective balance so long as Eastern Europe was in the grip of Russian satellite régimes.

In the West, this type of argument is usually advanced in order to prove that NATO, and the American presence in Europe as its material guarantee, will remain necessary under any conceivable new Soviet policy: the Americans, it is said, can withdraw *as little* as the Russians will ever give up their satellites. But the Soviet government will hardly feel that their effort at a *détente* has achieved its object while American garrisons and bases stay in Europe —they are the very symbol of the "Cold War" which Stalin has provoked and which his heirs desire to end. It may therefore be no less relevant to turn the argument into an indication of what the Soviets will have to do in order to achieve "real peace": the Americans, it would then run, can withdraw *as soon and as far* as the Russians liquidate their satellite empire.

So long as military tension was acute, what mattered was to keep the military frontier of the West as far as possible to the east, by maintaining our garrison in Western Germany and drawing her into NATO. Conversely, in a situation of long-term *détente*, a gradual disengagement of the major powers from the centre of Europe should be possible, provided there is a balance of potential strength. But because the forces of the Communist satellite régime, including Eastern Germany, automatically form part of the potential of the Soviet bloc, it follows that we can only agree to a withdrawal of the *military* frontier of the West in return for a corresponding withdrawal of the *political* frontier of the Soviet bloc, and that the latter must now be the main objective of Western policy in Europe. In other words, the only road to a stable European peace leads through liberation.

I AM, of course, aware that during the last two years the word "liberation" has become suspect to many people in the West, owing to its association with a false rhetoric of bomb-rattling and mindless threats. The objective of liberation, they feel, implies the threat of aggressive war—a threat that is criminal if meant seriously, and imbecile if conceived as "bluff."

In fact, no such threat is implied in the word—any more than the forcible restoration of the pre-war régimes of the liberated peoples is implied. To liberate means to make free those who are at present enslaved; liberation of some or all of the satellite nations is the only alternative to permanent acceptance of the status quo. We have shown that on the basis of the status quo in Europe it will not be possible to have real peace, guaranteed by a balance of power; conversely, the more willing the Soviets are to set the enslaved peoples free, the further can we

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advance towards a stable peace. Liberation, so far from implying a threat of war, must be the central objective in any negotiation for a European peace settlement.

But is such an aim attainable? Will the rulers of Communist Russia ever voluntarily surrender a satellite Communist régime, however artificial and thinly based? I can see no reason of principle against it. The precedent of Persian Azerbaijan has been mentioned, and Communist doctrine provides for necessary retreats where this is required by the "higher interests" of the Soviet Union. These higher interests would be clear enough, provided that the released country or countries were not incorporated in a military alliance of Russia's opponents, and provided further that their liberation be rewarded by a corresponding degree of Western military disengagement from Europe. Russia, in other words, would give up certain positions in exchange for reduced tension and increased security; there is nothing inherently impossible in this.

It is true, however, that such a deal is improbable under the leadership of Mr. Khrushchev. While the general Russian pressure for a *détente* has steadily increased under all the successors of Stalin, the specific contribution of Mr. Khrushchev has been the ideological twist—the emphasis on the link between each temporary agreement with the "class enemy" and the permanent aims of world revolution. Before Mr. Khrushchev took over the effective direction of Soviet policy, the Malenkov government had gone far to prepare the liquidation of the conflict with Tito; when Khrushchev took charge, he tried to combine an act of international goodwill with an appeal to the heretic Communist to return to the Soviet bloc. Both before and after Stalin's death, the Soviet government had at times played with the idea of permitting free all-German elections—in which the East German satellite would perish—in return for an advance guarantee that a united Germany would not join NATO; Khrushchev has been the first Soviet leader publicly to state that the "economic and social achievements" of the East German régime must not be sacrificed for the sake of "mechanical unification."

For reasons which are presumably rooted in his concern to preserve at all costs the supremacy of the Communist Party inside Russia, Mr. Khrushchev thus seems rather more concerned than some of his colleagues to avoid any retreat from the ideological positions of international Communism—and rather less concerned with putting Russia's security and the lightening of her economic burdens first. But in the present state of "collective leadership," his is hardly an impregnable position. Rather does it appear that his ideological diplomacy is as much on trial as his agricultural policy: he has promised to produce the needed *détente* by a generous expenditure of smiles and friendly gestures, but without surrendering any Communist positions—and he will be judged by results. In the interest of a stable peace, it is not desirable that the results should fulfil his expectations.

OF COURSE, Mr. Khrushchev's friends are telling us on all sides that we must accept Mr. Khrushchev's terms—peace on the basis of the status quo and a permanent Soviet preponderance in Europe. The alternative, they assure us, would be to revert to the former state of hypertension with the ultimate risk of nuclear world war. But that is no longer the case. There was, indeed, a time when the West had to risk war by defying aggression in order to survive, and did so. Today, thanks to the bold decisions then taken, and to the common strength built up in the intervening years, we are no longer called upon to take such terrible risks. We have only to run the hazard that we may have to wait a little longer for the full fruits of the *détente* if we do not jump at the first Soviet offer of a settlement on the basis of the status quo—of an unbalanced and unstable peace. For the sake of the bitter sacrifices of the past and of the real peace we need, a little more patience seems well worth while.

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Geoffrey Gorer

The Pornography of Death

"Birth, and copulation, and death.
That's all the facts when you come to brass tacks;
Birth, and copulation, and death."
T. S. Eliot. SWEENEY AGONISTES (1932)

PORNOGRAPHY is, no doubt, the opposite face, the shadow, of prudery, whereas obscenity is an aspect of seemliness. No society has been recorded which has not its rules of seemliness, of words or actions which arouse discomfort and embarrassment in some contexts, though they are essential in others. The people before whom one must maintain a watchful seemliness vary from society to society: all people of the opposite sex, or all juniors, or all elders, or one's parents-in-law, or one's social superiors or inferiors, or one's grandchildren have been selected in different societies as groups in whose presence the employment of certain words or the performance of certain actions would be considered offensive; and then these words or actions become charged with effect. There is a tendency for these words and actions to be related to sex and excretion, but this is neither necessary nor universal; according to Malinowski, the Trobrianders surround eating with as much shame as excretion; and in other societies personal names or aspects of ritual come under the same taboos.

Rules of seemliness are apparently universal; and the non-observance of these rules, or anecdotes which involve the breaking of the rules, provoke that peculiar type of laughter which seems identical the world over; however little one may know about a strange society, however little one may know about the functions of laughter in that society (and these can be very various) one can immediately tell when people are laughing at an obscene joke. The topper of the joke may be "And then he ate the whole meal in front of them!" or "She used her husband's name in the presence of his mother!" but the laughter is the same; the taboos of seemliness have been broken and the result is hilarious. Typically, such laughter is confined to one-sex groups and is more general with the young, just entering into the complexities of adult life.

Obscenity then is a universal, an aspect of man and woman living in society; everywhere and at all times there are words and actions which, when misplaced, can produce shock, social embarrassment, and laughter. Pornography on the other hand, the description of tabooed activities to produce hallucination or delusion, seems to be a very much rarer phenomenon. It probably can only arise in literate societies, and we certainly have no records of it for non-literate ones; for whereas the enjoyment of obscenity is predominantly social, the enjoyment of pornography is predominantly private. The fantasies from

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which pornography derives could of course be generated in any society; but it seems doubtful whether they would ever be communicated without the intermediary of literacy.

The one possible exception to this generalisation is the use of the plastic arts without any letterpress. I have never felt quite certain that the three-dimensional *poses plastiques* on so many Hindu temples (notably the "Black Pagoda" at Konarak) have really the high-falutin Worship of the Life Force or Glorification of the Creative Aspect of Sex which their apologists claim for them; many of them seem to me very like "feelthy" pictures, despite the skill with which they are executed. There are too the erotic woodcuts of Japan; but quite a lot of evidence suggests that these are thought of as laughter-provoking (i.e. obscene) by the Japanese themselves. We have no knowledge of the functions of the Peruvian pottery.

As far as my knowledge goes, the only Asiatic society which has a long-standing tradition of pornographic literature is China; and, it would appear, social life under the Manchus was surrounded by much the same haze of prudery as distinguished the 19th century in much of Europe and the Americas, even though the emphasis fell rather differently; women's deformed feet seem to have been the greatest focus of peeking and sniggering, rather than their ankles or the cleft between their breasts; but by and large life in Manchu China seems to have been nearly as full of "unmentionables" as life in Victoria's heyday.

PORNOGRAPHY would appear to be a concomitant of prudery, and usually the periods of the greatest production of pornography have also been the periods of the most rampant prudery. In contrast to obscenity, which is chiefly defined by situation, prudery is defined by subject; some aspect of human experience is treated as inherently shameful or abhorrent, so that it can never be discussed or referred to openly, and experience of it tends to be clandestine and accompanied by feelings of guilt and unworthiness. The unmentionable aspect of experience then tends to become a subject for much private fantasy, more or less realistic, fantasy charged with pleasurable guilt or guilty pleasure; and those whose power of fantasy is weak, or whose demand is insatiable, constitute a market for the printed fantasies of the pornographer.

Traditionally, and in the lexicographic meaning of the term, pornography has been concerned with sexuality. For the greater part of the last two hundred years copulation and (at least in the mid-Victorian decades) birth were the "unmentionables" of the triad of basic human experiences which "are all the facts when you come to brass tacks," around which so much private fantasy and semi-clandestine pornography were erected. During most of this period death was no mystery, except in the sense that death is always a mystery. Children were encouraged to think about death, their own deaths and the edifying or cautionary death-beds of others. It can have been a rare individual who, in the 19th century with its high mortality, had not witnessed at least one actual dying, as well as paying their respect to "beautiful corpses"; funerals were the occasion of the greatest display for working class, middle class, and aristocrat. The cemetery was the centre of every old-established village, and they were prominent in most towns. It was fairly late in the 19th century when the execution of criminals ceased to be a public holiday as well as a public warning. Mr. Fairchild had no difficulty in finding a suitably garnished gibbet for his moral lesson.

In the 20th century, however, there seems to have been an unremarked shift in prudery; whereas copulation has become more and more "mentionable," particularly in the Anglo-Saxon societies, death has become more and more "unmentionable" *as a natural process*. I cannot recollect a novel or play of the last twenty years or so which has a "death-bed scene" in it, describing in any detail the death "from natural causes" of a major character; this topic was a set piece for most of the eminent Victorian and Edwardian writers, evoking their finest prose and their most elaborate technical effects to produce the

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greatest amount of pathos or edification.

One of the reasons, I imagine, for this plethora of death-bed scenes—apart from their intrinsic emotional and religious content—was that it was one of the relatively few experiences that an author could be fairly sure would have been shared by the vast majority of his readers. Questioning my old acquaintances, I cannot find one over the age of sixty who did not witness the agony of at least one near relative; I do not think I know a single person under the age of thirty who has had a similar experience. Of course my acquaintance is neither very extensive nor particularly representative; but in this instance I do think it is typical of the change of attitude and "exposure."

THE natural processes of corruption and decay have become disgusting, as disgusting as the natural processes of birth and copulation were a century ago; preoccupation about such processes is (or was) morbid and unhealthy, to be discouraged in all and punished in the young. Our great-grandparents were told that babies were found under gooseberry bushes or cabbages; our children are likely to be told that those who have passed on (fie! on the gross Anglo-Saxon monosyllable) are changed into flowers, or lie at rest in lovely gardens. The ugly facts are relentlessly hidden; the art of the embalmers is an art of complete denial.

It seems possible to trace a connection between the shift of taboos and the shift in religious beliefs. In the 19th century most of the inhabitants of Protestant countries seem to have subscribed to the Pauline beliefs in the sinfulness of the body and the certainty of the after-life. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory." It was possible to insist on the corruption of the dead body, and the dishonour of its begetting, while there was a living belief in the incorruption and the glory of the immortal part. But in England, at any rate, belief in the future life as taught in Christian doctrine is very uncommon today even in the minority who make church-going or prayer a consistent part of their lives; and without some such belief natural death and physical decomposition have become too horrible to contemplate or to discuss. It seems symptomatic that the contemporary sect of Christian Science should deny the fact of physical death, even to the extent (so it is said) of refusing to allow the word to be printed in the *Christian Science Monitor*.

During the last half-century public health measures and improved preventive medicine have made natural death among the younger members of the population much more uncommon than it had been in earlier periods, so that a death in the family, save in the fullness of time, became a relatively uncommon incident in home life; and, simultaneously, violent death increased in a manner unparalleled in human history. Wars and revolutions, concentration camps and gang feuds were the most publicised of the causes for these violent deaths; but the diffusion of the automobile, with its constant and unnoticed toll of fatal accidents, may well have been most influential in bringing the possibility of violent death into the expectations of law-abiding people in time of peace. While natural death became more and more smothered in prudery, violent death has played an ever-growing part in the fantasies offered to mass audiences—detective stories, thrillers, Westerns, war stories, spy stories, science fiction, and eventually horror comics.

There seem to be a number of parallels between the fantasies which titillate our curiosity about the mystery of sex, and those which titillate our curiosity about the mystery of death. In both types of fantasy, the emotions which are typically concomitant of the acts—love or grief—are paid little or no attention, while the sensations are enhanced as much as a customary poverty of language permits. If marital intercourse be considered the natural expression of sex for most of humanity most of the time, then "natural sex" plays as little rôle as "natural death" (the ham-fisted attempts of D. H. Lawrence and Jules Romains to describe "natural sex" realistically but high-mindedly prove the

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rule). Neither type of fantasy can have any real development, for once the protagonist has done something, he or she must proceed to do something else, with or to somebody else, more refined, more complicated, or more sensational than what had occurred before. This somebody else is not a person; it is either a set of genitals, with or without secondary sexual characteristics, or a body, perhaps capable of suffering pain as well as death. Since most languages are relatively poor in words or constructions to express intense pleasure or intense pain, the written portions of both types of fantasy abound in onomatopæic conglomerations of letters meant to evoke the sighs, gasps, groans, screams, and rattles concomitant to the described actions. Both types of fantasy rely heavily on adjective and simile. Both types of fantasy are completely unrealistic, since they ignore all physical, social, or legal limitations, and both types have complete hallucination of the reader or viewer as their object.

THERE seems little question that the instinct of those censorious busybodies preoccupied with other people's morals was correct when they linked the pornography of death with the pornography of sex. This, however, seems to be the only thing which has been correct in their deductions or attempted actions. There is no valid evidence to suppose that either type of pornography is an incitement to action; rather are they substitute gratifications. The belief that such hallucinatory works would incite their readers to copy the actions depicted would seem to be indirect homage to the late Oscar Wilde, who described such a process in *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*; I know of no authenticated parallels in real life, though investigators and magistrates with bees in their bonnets can usually persuade juvenile delinquents to admit to exposure to whatever medium of mass communication they are choosing to make a scapegoat.

Despite some gifted precursors, such as Andréa de Nerciat or Edgar Allen Poe, most works in both pornographies are æsthetically objectionable; but it is questionable whether, from the purely æsthetic point of view, there is much more to be said for the greater part of the more anodyne fare provided by contemporary mass media of communication. Psychological Utopians tend to condemn substitute gratifications as such, at least where copulation is involved; they have so far been chary in dealing with death.

Nevertheless, people have to come to terms with the basic facts of birth, copulation, and death, and somehow accept their implications; if social prudery prevents this being done in an open and dignified fashion, then it will be done surreptitiously. If we dislike the modern pornography of death, then we must give back to death—natural death—its parade and publicity, re-admit grief and mourning. If we make death unmentionable in polite society—"not before the children"—we almost ensure the continuation of the "horror comic." No censorship has ever been really effective.

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Sir John Cockcroft

The Future of Atomic Energy

TO MANY of us this Conference has been a celebration of a very great achievement of the scientific world—the harnessing of the energy of atomic nuclei to serve the future needs of man. This is the culmination of scientific work of men of genius in many nations. It is fitting therefore that representatives of the great majority of countries should have come together to present their contributions to this work and to discuss how this new source of power can help the future development of their countries and the whole human race.

We have had described to us the first experimental atomic power stations and have heard that they are working well. We have also heard of the rapid progress of construction of the first full-scale nuclear power stations. Within two years they will be delivering very substantial amounts of electricity to industry and we will begin to gain experience in their operation and economics. These early stations will be closely followed by successors of different and generally improved designs, so that within five years we are likely to have at least ten nuclear power stations generating up to 200 megawatts in a single unit operating in different parts of the world.

These will all be pioneering or demonstration stations built to test the technology on which all depends, and to compare the relative advantages of the ten most promising types both from the point of view of economics and also of reliability and safety in operation. So most of the next decade will be occupied in laying a sound basis from which nuclear power can expand rapidly to become in the end the major power source of the world. Until we have achieved a satisfactory operating experience we will not be justified in embarking on a more rapid expansion.

However, this new industrial development has the advantage of a very great and unparalleled concentration of scientific and engineering ability driving it forward with imagination and enthusiasm—as you can judge from the papers which have been presented to this Conference. So the speed of development will be rapid and the nuclear power stations of 1970 will look as different from those of 1957 as the modern motor car differs from the Model T Ford.

Uranium for Coal

THE papers presented to the Conference have shown that we must not expect the cost of nuclear power to be cheaper in the next decade than power from coal. The concensus of opinion is that capital costs will be

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This article is the text of Sir John Cockcroft's address to the United Nations Conference on Atomic Energy in Geneva.

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appreciably higher—fifty to one hundred per cent higher—than the capital costs of coal stations, but that fuel costs will be less than half that for coal. So on balance there should be little difference in the cost of power.

But to many countries this is not the important point. The important point is to obtain an *additional* source of energy to our conventional energy resources where they are becoming overstrained.

Nevertheless, the whole history of engineering development shows how rapidly capital costs fall in the early stages of important new developments, and there is good reason to believe that in the second decade the cost of nuclear power will fall below that of power from coal and oil.

Our second major objective is progressively to increase the amount of energy we can extract from each ton of uranium and thorium. We believe, although we have not yet proved the point, that in the early stations we can extract from one ton of uranium the heat equivalent of about 10,000 tons of coal in a single fuel cycle; but we have also heard of the promise of recycling the fuel in thermal reactors several times so that the energy extraction can be increased five- or ten-fold. We have also heard of the more ambitious *final* goal of achieving the nuclear physicist's dream of making use of the breeding principle, and so extracting a great part of the fission energy of the whole uranium. In this way we expect to make one ton of uranium do the work of at least a million tons of coal. The engineer has still to convert the physicist's dream into large-scale practical power stations, but we have heard during the Conference of the building of large-scale experimental breeder reactors both of the homogeneous and fast reactor types. Both have their difficult engineering problems, but sometime during the second decade breeding is likely to be an important characteristic of nuclear power stations.

Our economists and statisticians have looked ahead to the years 1975 and 2000 and, on the basis of past experience of the rate of increase of energy requirements, they have predicted that by these years our energy requirements will increase by at least one and a half times in 1975 and three times in the year 2000. So by the end of the century the world is likely to require the energy equivalent of seven or eight billion tons of coal a year as compared with our present usage of 1·7 billion tons a year. Almost one half of this energy will be required for generating electricity. Hydro-electricity should by then be fully developed, but even so will only do the work of one billion tons of coal a year. It will be a great help to the human race if by the year 2000 nuclear energy can generate the remainder of the electricity and so do the work of two to three billion tons of coal a year.

We have heard the forecast of uranium supplies—how it occurs throughout the world, not only in concentrated deposits but in abundant gold ores, shales, phosphate rocks. In seven countries alone there is reported to be available at least one million tons of uranium, whilst costs of uranium towards the end of the next decade have been predicted to be as low as ten dollars a pound. The evidence presented to this Conference suggests that in the 1960's there will be more than enough uranium for the nuclear power development of that decade. If we look further ahead and combine the forecast of nuclear energy produced in the year 2000 with the forecast of the achievement of breeding, we can see at once that only a few thousand tons of uranium or thorium a year would be required for this task. So there would appear to be ample uranium and thorium available to accept the economists' predicted task, and if necessary to do even more than this, carrying a still greater share of the world's needs until we achieve our final goal and produce by fusion reactions in the *light* elements an inexhaustible power source for the world.

Hope for the under-developed areas

IF WE look into the middle distance—the 1970's—the use of nuclear power is likely to vary greatly from nation to nation. Some countries such as Norway, blessed by abundant and cheap hydro-electric power, will still be developing these resources as their primary source of energy. Many other nations such as

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France, Italy, Portugal, and Sweden, with important hydro-electric developments still to come, will by then have completed this development and will be turning to nuclear power.

Great Britain is an example of a highly industrialised country with small hydro-electric resources, with poor prospects of any substantial increase in coal production, and with a rapidly increasing demand for electricity and other forms of energy. So early nuclear power development is essential for Britain—it comes only just in time for us—and we believe that by 1975 almost half our electricity will be developed from nuclear energy.

The United States presents a different picture of a great industrial country with very great reserves of easily worked coal. Their speakers have said that the use of nuclear energy in their country will depend mainly on its cost relative to power from coal. So they think that by 1975 the production of power generated from nuclear energy will be between one per cent and fifteen per cent out of their total power depending on whether costs are nine mils a unit or six mils a unit. The Canadian position seems to be very similar.

The situation in the so-called "under-developed" countries is different again. India is a typical example of an "under-developed country" since its real income per head is only one tenth that of Britain. It seems also that India's energy consumption per head is in the same proportion—that is, one tenth that of Britain. Dr. Bhabha's paper points out that eighty per cent of this comes from the burning of dung which would no doubt be better used for increasing the productivity of agriculture. The production of electricity per head in India is at present eighty times less than in Britain but is now planned to increase seven-fold by 1975. So electrical capacity will have to increase from three and a half million kilowatts to twenty-five million kilowatts installed by that time. The potential hydro-electric capacity is about thirty-five million kilowatts so that this would be exhausted in the succeeding decade. Dr. Bhabha has said that since the capital cost of hydro-electric development is likely to be less than that of nuclear power development the most important part of the electrification programme will initially be carried by hydro-electricity. On the other hand nuclear energy will have a specific rôle to play in areas where hydro-electric development is likely to be slow because of it being combined with irrigation plans which require very large capital expenditure. There are also special areas in India where the construction of thermal stations is at present justified and this part of the load may in the future be taken by nuclear power stations particularly where cost of transport of coal is very high.

The economic development of such countries depends a good deal on the availability of capital resources. Nuclear power may therefore have some special advantages when capital costs of reactors fall, since it avoids the heavy capital expenditure on coal mines and on special facilities for transport of fuel. Nevertheless we must recognise that nuclear energy by itself is not a magic key to prosperity for under-developed countries. The main requirement is the provision of capital and the development of the technology and agriculture of these countries. Nuclear energy will ensure that sufficient energy is available to allow these developments to take place.

BESIDES these general aids to development, nuclear energy may have a special part to play in some regions. One of these may be in the development of arid zones. We have heard, for example, that one third of the power used in Israel today is devoted to irrigation—for pumping water—and that Israel is planning a four-fold increase in irrigated areas in the next decade. So the uranium in their phosphate rocks should be very important in providing fuel for this increased pumping power.

Dr. Schonland has suggested that in Southern Africa the semi-arid Karoo could become a well-watered region if the waters of the swamps of Northern Bechuanaland could be pumped to the Karoo. Nuclear power may help.

Professor Oliphant has suggested that the tropical parts of Australia, particularly the central and western areas, could support

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much higher populations if life there could be made more attractive and work be made more efficient by a widespread adoption of air-conditioning. This has already been shown to have a marked effect in other tropical countries. These areas are remote from sources of fossil fuels and are short of water. Here, then, is a rôle for the so-called "packaged reactor" driving gas turbines, since gas turbines do not require large amounts of cooling water. Reactors producing power in blocks of about ten megawatts seem likely to have important applications in remote and under-developed areas.

It seems also that recent developments in the demineralisation of sea-water offer prospects that nuclear power may one day be used to produce large quantities of fresh water from the sea at a reasonable cost for waterless areas near the sea such as South West Africa.

Nuclear energy will have another special rôle to play in providing power for industrial and mining areas remote from coal mines and hydro-electric supplies. In South Africa coal from the Transvaal and Natal has to be transported to the Cape by an already overloaded railway system over a distance of 1,000 miles, so that the cost of power is twice that at the source of coal and is about 0·8d. per unit. In the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, coal is transported from Wankie four hundred to five hundred miles over an overloaded railway system to the copper mines of Northern Rhodesia. By 1962 the Rhodesias will need four million tons of coal a year for power generation alone and this is the whole predicted output of the mines at that date. Some help will indeed come from the hydro-electric development of the Kariba Gorge but this is two hundred and fifty to two hundred miles from the mines and transmission costs are likely to be abnormally high and will double the cost of power at the source. So Dr. Schonland suggests that by the 1970's nuclear power stations of considerable size—perhaps up to 1,000 megawatts—could be contemplated, in the copper belt itself. By this time nuclear power is likely to be important also at the Cape.

There are many other regions in the world where mines are remote from fuel sources. Thus in Canada the present cost of diesel-generated power at Port Radium and Beaver Lodge is four times the normal cost. Similar cost levels prevail in mining areas of Australia such as Broken Hill. The local application of nuclear power should encourage the production at the mine itself of highly refined metals by electrolytic and electrothermal processes. In this case, capital investment might be diverted from the building of railway systems to carry coal to mining areas, and ores and crude metal products back to industrial areas; instead the capital might be used for nuclear power units. Nuclear power units for some of these areas would have to be built in a transportable form and would probably have to use enriched fuel with provision for some regeneration of fuel. Such units could probably be built within five years to produce power at about twice the cost of power from full-scale stations. In such areas, however, these costs would be acceptable.

Of Ships and Gamma Rays

THERE are other processing industries, such as cement, or pulp, or paper, often located away from fuel sources where energy is required in the form of high-temperature heat. Reactors producing high-temperature gas might be developed for such purposes.

Industries such as aluminium could absorb the output of the largest scale nuclear power plants now contemplated. These plants may produce power at cost well below that for coal stations in the second decade, though they are unlikely to compete with the lowest cost hydro power. Nevertheless, in the long run their use may lead to large-scale shifts in the location of metallurgical industries.

We have not discussed in the Conference the possible application of atomic energy to transport, which today consumes about eight per cent of the energy of the world. The United States has already shown that the nuclear propulsion of ships is technically feasible but only a limited amount of information on the economics of nuclear propulsion is available. A fairly recent discussion in a

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United States Congressional Committee suggested that present nuclear propulsion systems would lead to costs about ten times normal commercial costs. On quite general grounds it would appear that commercial nuclear propulsion of ships is not likely to develop until the cost of heat energy from pure fissile material is appreciably less than that of fuel oil at £6 per ton. This obviously requires that plutonium or U233 should become available as a by-product of reactor operations at a cost of appreciably less than £6 per gram. Regeneration of fuel and high burn-up in fuel elements will help. Thus if plutonium becomes available at £3 per gram, and fifty per cent burn-up and thirty-three per cent thermal efficiency are achieved, this would lead to fuel costs of 0·3d. per kw./hour, which would be commercially interesting.

It seems quite possible that these conditions will be reached by the time large-scale breeding is achieved. But many other technical considerations have to be taken into account in determining the desirability of commercial nuclear ship propulsion. The engineers responsible must in particular be specially concerned with potential hazards due to leaks of radioactivity in such confined quarters; for such reasons I do not myself predict a rapid development of commercial nuclear propulsion.

In the present state of nuclear technology, chemical and metallurgical operations play a major part and their rôle is likely to become more important as we progress towards the development of breeding, for by then nuclear fuel costs will be due almost entirely to chemical processing costs. Some of the homogeneous nuclear power plants of the future may indeed be chemical plants of highly specialised nature. Even with solid fuel reactors there are considerable possibilities for reducing recycling costs by simpler processes in which some of the important radioactive waste products which poison the chain reaction are removed without dissolving the fuel elements in acids or solvents. Since the spent fuel element will be highly radioactive, remotely controlled operations will be necessary—here is a good application for the automatic factory.

The development of nuclear energy will inevitably lead to the production of large quantities of radioactive fission products. At present they are looked upon as a nuisance and a problem for the future since they have to be stored for long periods of time. However, it seems that the radiation from these waste products will find important uses. The gamma radiation from spent fuel elements can be used in the first few months after their withdrawal from the reactor and we have heard of several such applications. Our discussions on waste disposal have shown that the long-lived useful products, radiocaesium and radiostrontium, will be separated from the rest of the fission products and concentrated into radioactive sources. The remaining fission products will be concentrated and stored until the activity decays to low enough levels for discharge to the sea or for fixation. The cost of this storage has been estimated to be less than two per cent of the cost of nuclear power and will probably be offset by revenue from the sale of the useful radiocaesium and strontium, which will become available in source strengths varying from kilocurie sources of radiocaesium for radiotherapy to megacurie sources for industrial applications.

Atoms vs. Insects

Work on the application of radiations needs to be pursued on a much wider front before its possibilities can be properly evaluated. It already seems certain that sterilisation of pharmaceuticals and some medical supplies could be carried out with safety as soon as processed fission products are made available in quantity. The sterilisation of food has already been strikingly demonstrated but the processes require much further study and trial before it can be certain that it is acceptable and safe for general use.

A most promising field of application of radiation is in insect control. Successful large-scale experiments have been reported from the U.S.A. on the eradication of the screw-worm by liberating large numbers of males rendered infertile by suitable doses of

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gamma radiation. In this conference we have also heard of the control of the parasitic disease trichinosis which is transmitted by larvæ in pork: irradiation of hog carcases sterilises the female and breaks the disease cycle. In Great Britain, joint studies by the Forest Products Research Laboratory and the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority have shown that the life of insects infecting wood can be markedly shortened and their ability to lay fertile eggs prevented by doses much smaller than those needed to kill the beetles and larvæ (lyctus species). The eggs of the death-watch beetle are rendered infertile by doses of a few thousand roentgens. The preservation of historic timber and valuable furniture is an exciting possibility. Entomologists ought to look for other applications in this field.

Chemical syntheses is an application that could use large quantities of fission-products. It is accepted that chain-reactions offer the best hope of economical utilisation. The fields of polymer modification and polymerisation have been studied actively. The very high conversion rates observed in some emulsion polymerisations should be noted. Halogenation and oxidation have been neglected relatively. It is not to be expected that industry will set aside well-established processes unless the use of radiation offers some well-marked advantage. Too much current effort is devoted to existing fields of production. In Great Britain, industry is studying such fields with a view to improvements and new products. We are also sponsoring basic research in radiation chemistry and less profound studies in the organic chemistry field. The irradiation of concentrated solutions, non-aqueous solvents, new approaches to chlorination and molecular rearrangements, are all being studied. Clear selective reactions of decomposition and oxidation have been revealed and high yields suggestive of chain processes have been observed in unexpected places. New pathways in sugar synthesis and degradation have been found, but it is too early to say that economic application is proven. The systematic study of organic radiation chemistry is still in its infancy, but seems to offer the best hope of progress. Radiation may also be applied in future to the fixation of nitrogen if it becomes really plentiful and cheap.

Keeping the Atom Safe for Man

IN PLANNING the development of nuclear energy during the next two decades we have a great responsibility to see that it is developed in such a way that it is an essentially safe industry and that it does not produce a substantial new hazard to the general population of the world.

We have been fortunate so far in having been able from the beginning to lay a sound scientific basis for health protection by the devoted labours of our biologists and health physicists. I do not think that any other new industry has had the advantages of such preparation. The immediate effect of radiation on living organisms has been studied by very large numbers of experiments on animals and as a result of this the International Commission on Radiological Protection has prepared a list of safe levels of radiation and of the amounts of radioactive materials which can be ingested. These recommendations have been incorporated into the working practice of all well-run atomic energy organisations and should form the basis of world-wide codes of practice to be promulgated by the World Health Organisation.

We have also a responsibility to the general public in our own countries in seeing to it that possible accidents to reactors cannot produce an appreciable hazard to surrounding populations. Here again codes of practice are being drawn up by experts who really know the hazards and the problems of control. The next step is to compare experiences and ideas of different countries and to agree on international codes of practice. Whilst we are accumulating experience of reactor operation much can be done to reduce these risks by adopting a policy of enclosing new types of reactors in buildings which are so constructed that they could contain any large-scale leakages of radioactivity resulting from a reactor accident.

The still larger problem of the long-term effects of raising the world-wide level of radia-

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tion by the dispersal of fission products has been discussed in our chemical and biological sessions. Our knowledge of the genetic effect of radiation on human beings is at present much less than our knowledge of the effects on animals and we should press on with research on human genetics and in the meantime adopt a cautious policy. We have some yardstick to guide us in the general background level of radiation due to cosmic rays, potassium in our blood, and radium in the walls of our houses and in the ground. This gives us all a radiation dose during our reproductive period varying from about three roentgens to six roentgens depending on the locality. Investigations are proceeding in Britain and the United States by Committees of the Medical Research Council and National Academy of Science which should help us to decide by how much the general background level of radioactivity may be allowed to increase without appreciable harm. These may well be followed by international discussion of this problem. We may then hope to prepare international codes of practice which will determine the amounts of radioactive gases which may be safely discharged to the atmosphere and of radioactive liquids and solids which may be safely discharged to the ocean.

I am quite sure that by collaboration and discussion we can carry out this great new development in a far safer way than has been the case in any other new activity of the human race.

WE HAVE still to discuss in our closing session the important question of how international cooperation can help in speeding up this vital new development. Atomic energy, by its world-wide effects in the field of public health, can for this reason alone benefit by international cooperation.

We must also not lose sight of the fact that its products—the fissile elements—are potentially very dangerous materials, not only to public health, but also because of their explosive possibilities. International cooperation in preventing the diversion of such materials to explosive uses will therefore be of the greatest importance.

In Western Europe we have made a beginning in a modest way in the European Atomic Energy Society in discussing our common scientific and technical problems, and this has already proved to be valuable.

The United Nations Organisation is in process of giving birth to a much more ambitious offspring—the International Atomic Energy Agency. We must all hope that its birth will not be too painful or too long delayed. The Agency, wisely guided, could do a great deal to ensure that the inherent dangers in our development are prevented.

Having looked into the cloudy crystal ball with my imperfect eyes I feel quite sure that the real picture twenty-five years hence will be very different. For scientific and technological progress is today so rapid that our predictions must be subject to great uncertainties. Rutherford in 1937 could not predict fission and did not believe that nuclear power was likely. Now power from fission reactions is assured. I would like tonight to have been able to predict when the exciting prospect of power from fusion reactions would be achieved. But although we are working seriously on this problem in Britain, my vision is not good enough for that. I am not so bold as our President. The experimental physicist must inevitably have a greater appreciation of the problems and difficulties than the theoretical physicist. However, my faith in the creative ability of the scientist is so great that I am sure that this will be achieved long before it is essential for man's needs.

We must all hope that the statesmen who control our destinies and whose vision has made this conference possible will continue to liberate the creative ability of the scientific world, and so enable it to produce those benefits which I have so imperfectly attempted to predict.

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TABLE TALK

WHAT, my American friend wished to know, were my impressions of British intellectual life? It was a question sometimes put to me by visitors during my two and a half years in London; and I knew that, when I shortly returned to the States, I would encounter it again on more than one occasion. Fortunately, I have found a reply which, if superficial, yet provides matter for conversation. So I blandly echoed Robert Peel's remark about the Whigs, and said: "Why, they are all cousins." And that set us happily rolling along the surface of things, for there is nothing that so intrigues an American as the "peculiarities" of British society and British life.

I remember, a couple of years back, reading Noel Annan's biography of Leslie Stephen and being amazed by the degree of intermarriage among such families as the Stephens, the Macaulays, the Darwins, the Huxleys, the Stracheys, etc. It is a phenomenon that has no counterpart in America, at least since 18th century New England. The two most (in fact, the two only) distinguished families in American letters—the Adamses and the Jameses—had much in common, but never, to the best of my knowledge, a marriage certificate. As for the rest of American cultural history, it is a roster of individuals, not of dynasties. Our wealthy families are said to go from shirt-sleeves to shirt-sleeves in three generations, our literary families go from oblivion to oblivion in one.

I was, therefore, not entirely unprepared for a good deal of cosy consanguinity within the English intellectual class. But what has astonished me, and what astonishes any American, is the extent to which almost *all* British intellectuals are cousins—not literally, of course, but in a metaphorical sense that is more than empty rhetoric. If they are not cousins, they are cousins once removed; or their paternal uncles are somehow related to their wives' maternal aunts; or their fathers went to school together; or their wives went to school together; or they went to the same public school (the number of people who seem to have known George Orwell at Eton is only matched by the number of people who are writing books about him); or one's father was a contributor to someone else's father's magazine; and so on and on. A tight little island, indeed.

In America it is otherwise, to put it mildly. What with the sheer size of the country, the heterogeneity of ethnic and religious groups (until quite recently, a good half of the American population was descended from first- or second-generation immigrants), intellectuals meet one another in the dark, so to speak. The only exception—the Russian-Jewish community of New York that plays so important a rôle in the cultural life of the city—proves the rule; for New York is not America, and this is one of the reasons why.

Perhaps I exaggerate; but it is the sharpness of the contrast that tempts me to. It is a sharpness rendered all the more vivid by another aspect of English life that is absent in America: the intermingling of the various élites in a national centre, London. In the U.S., the political people are in Washington, the publishing and theatre people in New York, the movie people in Los Angeles, while professors and the press are everywhere. (Most Englishmen I have met are not *really* aware that America has no national press, and that the overwhelming majority of university professors live in small towns.) It is quite possible for a man to edit a magazine with over a half-million readers, and never to have met anyone of distinction in politics, the drama, or music.

This fragmentation, moreover, appears to have a tendency to reinforce itself, so that even in such a city as New York, there is, by English standards, extraordinarily little intercourse among the various professional species —or within the same species, for that matter.

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It is by no means unimaginable that the senior editors of *The New Yorker* should never have met the senior editors of *Time*, and it is altogether within the realm of probability that neither group should ever meet, say, Elia Kazan or Thornton Wilder. It is very difficult to explain to an outsider why this should be the case. All the reasons sound so utterly trivial—the fact of sheer numbers, the tendency to suburban living, etc.—that one is ashamed to offer them. But they do add up to the situation as I have described it.

IT IS natural that, with the intellectual classes in the two countries living under such different conditions, their intellectual life—and not merely their social habits—should be affected. They will obviously be affected for good and evil, but it is utterly pointless to start a hasty calculation as to who comes off best, because each book-keeper is bound to measure the trans-Atlantic phenomenon in units that are axiomatic to him but inapplicable to it. Nevertheless, I shall venture a couple of generalisations.

By virtue of belonging to a society where everyone knows everyone, the English intellectual—or so it seems to me—is inclined to have a surer instinct for English political realities, whereas an American can more easily misunderstand the country in which he lives. If one looks at the radical literature of the thirties, the common themes and common slogans cannot disguise the fact that the English was far less absurd than the American. Both were propaganda, but where the English rarely went beyond distortion of the truth, their American counterparts often invented out of whole cloth without ever knowing it. Even today, such a movement as Bevanism has its roots in a segment of English reality, whereas American radicalism is born and exists in an ideological hot-house. With some amendment, the same point could be made of conservative and liberal political thinking in both countries.

On the other hand, I think the American may be in a better position to understand foreign political realities than is the English intellectual. As the Marxists like to say, "it is no accident" that American scholarship on Communist Russia and China, or on Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, has been—taken as a whole—superior to the English. Or that such continental "political" novelists as Koestler, Malraux, and Silone should be held in higher esteem in America than in England. The American political imagination is less constrained, less submissive to traditional habits, more Gothic and less Victorian. Such an imagination is dangerous, but in a haunted epoch like our own it also has its uses.

With regard to the creative life, the English possess all the more manifest advantages, while the Americans possess all the more manifest opportunities. An English writer has a sovereign relation to his language, a self-assuredness in his movements, which the American must wistfully admire. At the same time, where language and writer are so easily compatible, and writer and society so congenial, the muse may suffer from a lack of provocation. In America, provocation is flagrant, and the creative temperature consistently above normal. This is not healthy or natural; the American writer is, in comparison with the English, lonely, unhappy, frustrated. But whereas an Englishman can only add to English literature, an American is free to believe that he is creating American literature. Civilisations, like people, are only young once. And, in retrospect, the torments of youth can seem infinitely desirable. To the young, of course, impatient for maturity, they are only torments. Which is why there is, in all Anglo-American relations, an ineradicable flavour of mutual envy.

Irving Kristol

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Letter from BURMA

Pagodas and Rolling Mills

WHEN I was invited to join the *Chinthe's* cruise to Pagan, I naturally jumped at the chance. A visit to Pagan, the ancient capital of Burma, is not easy to arrange. There are only two practicable routes. One is down the Irrawaddy from Mandalay; the other is upriver from Chauk, a small town in the heart of the oil-fields. Modern transport has opened other approaches, but insurgency and other complications of modern politics have closed them. It takes no more than an hour by car from Chauk to Pagan, but since the road goes through insurgent territory, military protection is necessary; and though the local Army post will provide an escort for important visitors, it advises others (like myself) to go by boat, practically a whole day's trip.

Marco Polo—if indeed he made the voyage which he describes so vividly—entered Burma through the Chinese province of Yunnan and thence sailed down the Irrawaddy in the great Mongol expedition of 1287 which snuffed out the rule of the Burmese kings. Our own approach was considerably more prosaic and less consequential. Leaving Rangoon early one Monday morning, we flew to Mandalay in a rather austere, unpressurised old C-47 of the Union of Burma Airways. (The UBA is one of the few government enterprises which regularly turns a profit. "The only reason they make a profit," I was told by a cynical leader of the Opposition, "is that the Government is not master in its own house. So overland and water travel are not safe, and people are therefore compelled, for long-distance travel, to go by air. Since the UBA is a monopoly, and the Government can charge any prices at all without fear of competition, how can it help but make money?") I had always thought of Burma as wet and jungley, but in the dry season Mandalay is a dusty, semi-desert town on the east bank of the Irrawaddy. During the war it was bombed by both the Japanese and the Allies, and many of its important landmarks have been totally destroyed. The great palace of the Mandalay kings has been entirely gutted, although the impressive walls still stand; the interior is now used as a post for the new Burmese Army. But the northern end of the city remains dominated by Mandalay Hill, a miniature Potala, with its interlaced brick-and-masonry network of temples, pagodas, monasteries, pavilions, shaded walks, and refectories, all in varying stages of use and repair. From the proper angle, the whole is beautifully reflected in the eastern moat of the old palace grounds.

In February, the sandy banks of the Irrawaddy are high, and the channel is narrow. Because later, during the monsoon season, the river will rise as much as thirty feet, submerging its banks and flooding the adjacent countryside, there are no fixed wharves. The docks are simply anchored riverboats: when the river rises, the dock rises with it; when the river subsides, it returns to its low-water location. Since the channel is very low, narrow, and tortuous in February, travel is only possible by day, when the markers are clearly visible: ships must pull over for the night. There are not many good locations, and with some of them under the control of insurgents and dacoits, the number of practical anchorages is limited. The limits of a day's travel, therefore, run from one's starting anchorage to the farthest one reachable before nightfall. In this manner, the 90 miles from Mandalay to Pagan, even downstream, require one night anchorage and a little more

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than one daylight period; the return trip, upstream, is longer.

We arrived at our original anchorage, a floating dock moored to a thirty-foot embankment, to find that the captain of our ship had run aground on the hull of a sunken vessel, which had been bombed out during the war. From the main Mandalay wharf, the river appeared littered with upturned hulls, like metal whales lying in water too shallow for them. Although in many places these wrecks were a positive menace to navigation, they still lay where they had been sunk, ten years or more ago. The war had left behind more scrap metal, in the form of sunken ships, armoured equipment, abandoned artillery, and exploded munitions, than a peaceful Burma had been able to generate in all of its history. But although it is a hazard to navigation and an outrage on the primitive, peaceful landscape, it also opens to Burma some interesting economic perspectives. For the young socialist leaders in Rangoon, "socialism" has always automatically implied "industrialisation." The landscape of their Socialist Burma is to include not only pagodas and temple spires but factory chimneys as well. From this standpoint, the scrap metal is a real windfall. The only solution to Burma's overdependence on a single export crop—rice—is the development of new industries, both for export and for domestic consumption goods. On this point, the doctrinaire socialism of the Government leaders, the economic necessities of the moment, and the advice of the American economic and engineering consultants all agree. There has been for some time, therefore, consideration of a plan to build a rolling mill to provide steel for domestic production. The primary source of raw materials for the rolling mill will be the scrap metal lying around the country in metal landing mats, burned-out tanks, and the hulls which interfere with shipping on the Irrawaddy and other navigable rivers.

But the whole project remains pleasantly vague. Burma may or may not build a steel industry. In spite of the surveys and the talk and the plans, the issue is not really committed. One has the feeling in Burma that all the basic decisions remain to be made. Shall we industrialise or not?—a decision which other nations have made long since—still remains an open question. If we do industrialise, should we then have nationalised ownership, or should we have "workers' ownership" as in Yugoslavia? Or perhaps cooperative ownership as in Israel? Or mixed partnership of government and private capital? All of these, like many other questions, remain open. The story is even told of a government official who went to Spain and Southern France to have a look at *jai-alai* to see whether it might not make a good "national sport" for Burma.

WITH the kind aid of the Inland Water Transport Corporation, a former British enterprise now nationalised, the *Chinthe* was finally pulled free of the wreckage on which it had drifted. After loading up with food, gasoline, ice, and soda, and after taking aboard an Indian cook supplied through the good offices of the IWT, we finally started downstream on Tuesday. From the river, the hill of Mandalay was a golden painting, hanging still in the receding clouds. On our right, mile after mile, and hour after hour, there was an unending succession of temples and pagodas, sometimes massed, sometimes separated, ornamenting every hill or piece of raised ground. We could not hear the tinkling of bells on top of the golden and silver pagodas, which Marco Polo described, but we could imagine them and we could see the same flash and glitter which had captured his eye almost seven hundred years before. The old kings had tried to make of Mandalay a great religious centre, so they had built thousands of religious monuments, great and small, in the District of Sagaing, through which we were passing. It must be remembered that a Buddhist lays up merit for himself by building and repairing pagodas. And since a new one rates higher than the repair of an old one, new pagodas are constantly being built while the old ones fall into neglect and disrepair. Everyone who can afford to, builds one. (Another important way to acquire merit is to add gold leaf to the spires of certain famous pagodas, such as the Shwedagon in Rangoon, or to certain famous statues of Lord Buddha. As a result, some of these spires and statues have accumulated gold leaf to a considerable depth over the centuries and would now have a very substantial negotiable value.)

Religion really means something in Burma. There are pagodas, monasteries, and temples everywhere. Every morning, the streets of the

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cities and towns are filled with saffron-robed *pongyi*, begging-bowl in hand, making their calls on the faithful. Socialist ministers store up merit for themselves by sweeping out the Shwedagon Temple: the wives of ministers form committees to feed the monks at the Peace Pagoda. No one knows exactly how many pagodas and monks there are because it has been impossible to take a proper census since the beginning of the Second World War. In Tibet, it is estimated that as much as one-third of the adult male population is in cloth: in Thailand, about 300,000 males. Although the best estimate for Burma is more modest—between 80,000 and 100,000—for a population of nineteen million people this is still a considerable force. Apart from the full-time monks, a majority of Burmese men spend some time during their lives—anything from one day to one year—in a monastery, so that religion is a very important part of their experience.

From a Western point of view, this large, economically unproductive population looks like a drain on the people; but from a Burmese perspective, it fills an absolutely essential place. It holds the respect even of the secular politicians. During British rule, the temple schools in the villages kept alive the flame of Buddhist learning—so that today Burma has the highest literacy rate in South-East Asia—and of Burmese nationalism. But Hinayana Buddhism, which, like Hinduism, emphasises "renunciation," creates many problems for a government which is bent on modernisation. Although one can cite scripture that suggests the contrary, the fact is that Buddhism, strictly interpreted, conduces to an attitude of "non-attachment," renunciation of worldly goods, and contempt for "material" pursuits. Burmese political leaders, from such devoted lay Buddhists as Prime Minister U Nu on down, have given much thought to this problem. Does Buddhism stand against the economic programme of the political leaders? The Socialist Party theoretician and (some say) the No. 2 man in the Government, young Defence Minister U Ba Swe, has argued that there is "no contradiction": Marxism is the "correct doctrine" for the material sphere and Buddhism for the spiritual sphere. But the problem cannot so easily be defined out of existence.

In practice it touches on two questions. First, what should be the balance of pagodas and rolling mills? As one of our company said when we were passing through the dense concentrations of pagodas in the Sagaing District, "If they had put the same effort into housing, Burma would be the best-housed country in the world." And second, how can you arouse an appetite for economic development when you constantly preach the superiority of spiritual over material values, the evanescence of the phenomenal world, the vanity of effort, and the necessity of renunciation?

Burma is not yet as hard pressed for an answer as India. For one thing, life in Burma is much easier. There is an abundance of food, so that the fear of starvation, which one always feels in India, is absent. At a low level of economic activity, both pagodas and rolling mills are possible. But in the last analysis, in Burma, as throughout South-East Asia, whatever the religious leaders may feel, the desire for economic improvement is becoming a dominant motive among the people. The peasants will pay their deepest respects to the traditional religion but there is a growing desire, which is fed by all the agencies of mass communication—movies, newspapers, radios, schools—for raising the standard of living. The people have already, from an effective political point of view, rejected "non-attachment" and chosen economic progress. There is therefore the danger that the Gandhian and the extreme Buddhist emphasis on "non-attachment" may become irrelevant to popular aspirations; the people will then turn their support to those who offer them economic progress, even at the sacrifice of other values.

It is this emphasis on economic progress at all costs that has given Communist China its tremendous attractive power. Whether its claims of economic progress are justified or not, there is a feeling in Asia that however ruthless and undemocratic they may be, the Chinese Communists are achieving great things economically. If this is the primary value, then the destruction of traditional beliefs and customs is very much less important to the people than religious leaders believe. There is a fascination about a movement that can cut through all the tangled complexities of religious sentiment, traditional social structure, Asian slothfulness and passivism, and whip its people into a disciplined instrument of economic advance.

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The Western conscience is outraged by the notion of forced labour. There are, of course, many people who will never be convinced that there *is* forced labour in the Soviet Union, but they will certainly consider forced labour itself an evil. However, in Asia this is not necessarily so. Even if one is convinced of the existence of forced labour—and even of large-scale "liquidations"—the Asian conscience is not really outraged. After all, many of the great religious and civic works of antiquity were created by slave labour, or by some other variety of forced labour. History is always on the side of the slave-drivers; we reserve our admiration for the fruits of their organisational genius—the pyramids, the pagodas, the temples, the palaces. But who now remembers the slaves? The reality to focus on is the hydroelectric dam, the power station, the irrigation system, the canal, not the forced labour that brought it into being. Or, to take up another point of view, what's wrong with putting "socially useless elements"—beggars, unemployed, "traitors," "incorrigibles"—to work for the benefit of society as a whole? Is it better to "coddle" them, or to let them rot in useless inactivity in jail? For some Asian leaders, impatient with the intractable realities of Asian character that slow down their plans—negativism, indiscipline, "laziness," indifference—there is an almost irresistible fascination about the idea of forcing people "for their own good" to build, to create, to work in disciplined formations. Even though their democratic conscience makes them hesitate, they must certainly envy the Chinese leaders who do not have to worry about these things.

Great power creates its own balance of attractions and repulsions, and China's military success has left its fair share of both. In spite of their constant warfare with Communist insurgents—one of the central facts of life in Burma—the Burmese leaders are somehow able to draw a distinction between the Chinese Communists and their own Communists. Thus the Chinese Communists are "wonderful," while one's own Communists are fit only to be destroyed. And what about Chinese Communist help to one's own Communists? Let's push that out of consciousness to the netherworld of police, security, and intelligence. Because since they must live with the reality of 800 miles of shared frontier with Communist China, the Burmese want very desperately to believe that there is no danger. If you act friendlily and say nice things in public often enough, then maybe the Chinese will have to be nice in spite of themselves. It will be recalled that Churchill, too, during the last war, often praised the Soviet leaders as "honourable and trustworthy men," and even went on to say that, "I know of no government which stands to its obligations even in its own despite more solidly than the Russian Soviet Government." His later explanation would recommend itself instantly to Burmese leaders: "I felt bound to proclaim my confidence in Soviet good faith, in the hope of procuring it." (*Triumph and Tragedy*, p. 25.)

The danger is that by proclaiming this too often, the Government may over-convince the people. "We"—that is, the Government leaders—of course, "know better." But what about the people? And the students? Do they understand? The Chinese Communist Cultural Mission which toured Burma for several weeks in February 1955 was a sensational success, perhaps more political than artistic. More symptomatic is the fact that many of the articulate college and university students are anti-government and pro-Communist. In the recent elections in the Rangoon University Students Union, the Communist faction won control, in spite of all the help the ruling Socialist Party was able to give to its own Democratic Students Association. For a governing élite which itself came into power on the momentum of its student movement activities, this is a very sobering situation indeed. The radical student leaders of the thirties have lost their attraction for the radical students of today.

ON WEDNESDAY morning, we finally arrived at Nyaunggu, a riverport town about five miles from Pagan. We rented several jaunty ponycarts, which raced us over the deeply rutted sand roads into the centre of the town. From the very outskirts of the dusty town, one had the feeling of entering some ancient country, where the realities were those of an earlier epoch—pagodas and temples and a style of life that would one day give way before the new forces slowly working up from Rangoon. On both sides of us passed an endless succession of pagodas and temples, most of them abandoned and in a bad state of repair. As we went further, we

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seemed to enter a vast silent forest of pagodas rising from the sandy semi-desert; the occasional scrub trees were lost in the pagoda forest. Once in a while women passed along, gracefully balancing some burden on their heads; children played by the side of the road, their normal sounds strangely muted.

The site of Pagan covers some sixteen square miles. From within its precincts, one is completely surrounded by temples and pagodas as far as the eye can see. I do not know the actual count of structures, but one can easily accept the hyperbole of Burmese friends who speak of 40,000 or even—through some linguistic confusion—of four million. Although some structures date from as early as the 3rd century, most of the characteristic appearance of Pagan comes from what was built during the reign of King Anawrahta (1044–77), that is, in the half century preceding the Norman Conquest. Anawrahta conquered the southern Mon kingdom of Thaton, bringing its king and 30,000 subjects to Pagan, where they left the strong impress of their own peculiar Hinduised Buddhism. When the Mongols captured Pagan in 1287, they ended the reign of the Burmese kings for many centuries, and Pagan fell into disuse, the only people remaining behind being the descendants of the old pagoda slaves. These temple slaves are Burma's closest approximation to India's untouchables. Although Buddhism has never favoured casteism and untouchability—this is one of the things Gautama disliked about Hinduism—the temple slaves were real untouchables. It is hard to understand why the people who take care of sacred structures should have been considered pariahs, unless it was that they acquired their status through disgrace. Most of them, it is believed, were prisoners of war assigned to public slavery. But today their descendants are the true heirs of the glories of Pagan. The few sleepy villages that surround the site are inhabited by them. They eke out their livelihood by farming, fishing, caring for the temples, servicing the infrequent tourists, and begging. One found more Burmese begging here than anywhere else in the country; usually the beggars in the streets of Rangoon are Indians.

By comparison with the immense sophistication of Buddhist art in India—say the Ajanta caves—or in northern China or Japan, Pagan is simple and naïve. It achieves its effect not by the excellence of each individual item but rather by the cumulative impact of massed devotional architecture. The Buddhas are charming and simple, like a preliminary effort in terracotta rather than a great art in cast bronze and stone. The massive temples, such as the late 11th century Ananda, which reaches a height of one hundred and sixty-eight feet, recall the Hindu structures of southern India. The surviving lacquerwork, which is taught in the local Government Lacquer School, is very conventionalised and simple, and does not bear comparison with the work of Japan or China. Pagan is an archæological site, the remains of a passionately devoted faith; it is no longer a living centre.

ALTHOUGH we had been three days coming to Pagan, we had immediately to think about making our return. Having had our fill of Pagan and its dust, we were suddenly in a hurry to be moving again on the Irrawaddy, with a gentle refreshing breeze keeping us cool. So we set out to try to make the next anchorage by nightfall, an estimated two-hour trip. As the sun set, we were still far from Pakkoku, our intended anchorage, and we began to worry. Pakkoku itself was believed to be in the heart of insurgent territory, although we were not sure. The newspapers had reported several days before that Pakkoku was a rendezvous area for several hard-pressed Communist factions, who were trying to join forces for a more effective defence against the Burmese Army.

Just as we began to worry about reaching our anchorage, one of the huge stern-wheelers of the IWT hove into sight, obviously also going to the same position. Full steam up, it raced after us, soon coming alongside and then nearly swamping us in its wake. As darkness fell, it turned on its powerful lights and raced ahead; we followed happily. At Pakkoku, it stopped, and there was great excitement and confusion: Very pistols were fired, rockets burst, great crowds gathered, foghorns brayed, and searchlights probed the coastline. Sharing the excitement in our modest way, we nearly ran into a small scull. With all the noise around, the owner did not even try to shout or signal; he simply puffed more strongly on his cheroot, and sure enough the increased glow attracted our attention, thus avoiding a collision.

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It is only a few short years ago that the Government was virtually besieged in the capital. The insurgents were rampaging over the countryside, holding entire districts under their control. At one and the same time, the Government was fighting: the Red Flag Communists of Thakin Soe; the White Flag (orthodox) Communists of Than Tun; the PVO (wartime united front resistance movement) defectors; Army deserters; Karen rebels; Chinese General Li Mi's Kuomintang troops, who retreated into the Shan States from Yunnan Province after being defeated by the Chinese Communists; and just plain old bandits. Today, the Government has effective control in most important areas, its army is strong and confident, and the insurgents are weakening.

What is remarkable about this civil war is that the Government does not suppress the Communist Party behind the lines. Its argument is that it is fighting "illegal rebellion," not Communism. Communist rebels who give over their arms and surrender—unless convicted of one of three crimes, murder, rape, or arson—are granted amnesty. They are free to continue their fight against the Government by legal methods. They cannot therefore claim that the course of armed rebellion is the only one open to them. By this bold policy, the Government demonstrates both its deep democratic convictions and its self-confidence. One also senses a nostalgic reluctance to accept as permanent the declared hostility of their former comrades of the independence struggle.

The Communists therefore have the advantage of both legality and illegality. The advantage for an underground conspiracy to have its agents move freely in the midst of the enemy is, of course, incalculable. As long as the Party can conceal its direct association with the rebel armies, it is free to work on their behalf, to fight the Government, and to propagandise rebel policy.

In any event, we were anchored in insurgent territory the very night the Rangoon municipal elections took place, February 23rd. Our radio chose that occasion to be out of commission, so we did not then have the news that the Government bloc had won thirty-three of the thirty-five seats with a majority of sixty-eight per cent of the votes cast. One of the Opposition winners was the legal Communist Party candidate.

So at the very moment the Government victory was undoubtedly being celebrated in Rangoon, there we were, sitting out on the Irrawaddy, advised to keep our voices low and the shades of our cabin drawn in order not to attract insurgent attention. But several shots of whisky and a heated political argument dissolved our caution, and soon we were shouting at the top of our lungs. When some faint voice suggested that we might be overheard, one of us roared, "Let 'em hear! It'll do 'em good!"

Whether it would have done them some good or not, they did not seem to overhear us, and the next morning, somewhat hung over, we went on our way. The following day we reached Sagaing, this time on our left, sparkling and flashing in the sun as on our first day out. The wharf at Mandalay looked familiar and welcoming. As we passed the naval docks, we were happy to see an armoured cutter, ready for action. A naval ship is always exciting, but there is something particularly engaging about a young, new country like Burma having its own navy. We manœuvred our way through the sunken hulls, and this time managed to avoid running aground.

Herbert Passin

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André Derain: Art as Fate

'Un art n'est pas supérieur à un autre, il n'est pas nécessairement bien, il est, c'est tout. Un art est une fatalité.' DERAIN.

IT WAS in 1953, a year before his death at the age of seventy-four, that I visited Derain, who was then living at Chambourcy, a few miles outside St. Germain-en-Laye, in a large tumbledown house surrounded by a high wall. Forbidding at first sight, the house was warm and comfortable inside and crowded with objects of art and pictures. It was evidently lived in and loved. While my wife and I waited for Derain to appear, I spent the time looking at the pictures, which included several Corots, an early Cézanne, and a large profuse still life in the style of Snyders. What was so interesting about the collection was the emphasis on earlier art. Show cabinets held fragments or complete pieces (some of high quality) from Greece, Egypt, and the Near East; there were Wei figures, Negro masks and statues, and a large and imposing Greek head. Only two works by Derain were visible; these were both portraits of children, tender and sensitive in handling, and touched with that quivering hesitancy that informed so much of his later work.

"*Vous aimez ces choses-là, Monsieur?*" I heard a voice say and I turned to greet Derain. He stood in the doorway for a moment, blinking a little at me. He made an immediate impact. Rotund and heavily built, he was stuffed into a chocolate-brown corduroy suit and he doffed his beret on noticing my wife. As I took in his features, the bulk of the man began to dissolve into its component parts. His face was heavily creased and his eyes half obscured by pouches; but as he began to talk they were enlivened by glints of wit and intelligence. I was struck by the agility with which he manœuvred his bulk. His manner was both affectionate and courteous. He could evidently be tough, if the need arose, but he was also vulnerable. He had the humorous yet shrewd expression that can be observed in certain portraits of the 18th century and, as we sat face to face, I was reminded of Quentin La Tour's pastel of Crébillon. He spoke softly and with an elegant turn of phrase; and he never allowed the conversation to flag.

Derain plunged into controversial matters at once, explaining that his views, as he knew only too well, were far from popular. He darted such questions at me as "What would you think if I told you that I believe that the world is undergoing a bout of over-education in which instinctive reactions, which are essential for creative activity, are being damaged?" The tendency was, he affirmed, for everything to be so docketed, so explained away, that nothing was left to the imagination. Nor was that all. Although he was well aware that one could appreciate his painting for its own sake, he very much doubted if what he had in mind could be understood unless one had some glimmering of his ideas about contemporary society. There was no denying, he went on, that the world now derived an intense pleasure from erecting a socialistic and communistic structure in which the individual, with all his weaknesses and limitations, was dwarfed by the machinery of government; and this machinery would become clogged, he suddenly exclaimed, by its own complications. Embracing

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my wife and myself with a disarming gesture, he cried out, "You are both young, and must recognise the relevance of all I am saying: that respect for the individual is all-important. Above all, there must be room for those individuals who know how to enjoy. Indeed, enjoyment can only be retained as long as ideas or pursuits are followed with passion." His own aim in life had always been, and would continue to be, just this; and in this way he strove to make his art expressive of his passion.

"THAT'S why," Derain declared, looking at us with an ironical glance, "both my painting and my position are wrongly considered at the moment. I don't fit in. I am not attached to any principle—except that of liberty—but my idea of liberty is that it must be related to tradition. I don't wish to expound any theories as to what ought to be done in the arts. I simply paint as best I can. The point is," he leaned forward confidentially and almost whispered the words, "there are too many theories running around but not enough passion to make them work." He could throw out as many theories as the next man, but what did they signify, he declared. People were attached to his Fauve pictures largely because they could be used to illustrate a theory; they could be classified. But this view was to misunderstand his motives at that time; *Fauvisme* was not a very intellectual movement. Naturally, he went on, I was aware of the tendencies of the day, and studied Gauguin and much else besides. But the simple explanation of *Fauvisme*, as far as he was concerned, he declared, was that he was just happy to be a free man again—after life in the regiment. To enjoy colour for its own sake was the natural reaction of any young artist who had done his military service. (It was a point of view elaborated in his recently published letters to Vlaminck.)

"You know," Derain continued, "one of the reasons why I am delighted to have you here is because you are English, and I always associate with London much of my early happiness and the fun that I got out of life before the First World War." He told us that he had spent many delighted hours wandering about London, popping into pubs and frequenting the music halls, which had evidently made a great impression on him. He had also discovered Wapping; there it didn't matter in the least if you were a foreigner, you always found sympathy and amusement. In the Pool of London, too, he had come across those gaily coloured steamers that appear in several of his Fauve paintings. He reminisced gently about meals at the Cheshire Cheese and related how on one occasion he had made Picasso eat so much steak and oyster pudding and "toasted cheese" that the latter fell ill and jokingly accused Derain of trying to poison him.

London had not only stimulated his imagination with its gusto and local colour; it was clear that the museums had meant much to him. He told us that in 1905 he had studied primitive art in the British Museum and begun to be interested in negro sculpture; and this, he added, before any of the others. He still kept many examples of negro sculpture in his collection (and very fine they were, especially the Benin heads), but he was no longer interested in them now that they had ceased to stir by their emotional impact alone and had become a subject for classification. Yes, he continued, London presented a dazzling spectacle to the painter, and who could forget Hyde Park with its horsemen and nursemaids? His remarks on London made me realise, especially when he talked about the fashionable parade in Hyde Park, that his celebrated Fauve period paintings of London were essentially a vision of Edwardian England.

WHEN I asked Derain why he no longer cared for his Fauve period, he explained that the answer was very simple: he was now intrigued by different themes and ideas. An artist, he pointed out, never remains rooted in one track; he has to move on. At the moment, for instance, he was busy preparing for the pictures he wished to finish in the summer. They were to be painted at Aix and were to be undertaken not with blue as the predominant tone (as was so often the case with Cézanne) but with darker colours, black, for instance, as well as greys and shades of white. He was eager to capture the tonal values. "I think," he declared, "you can understand my enthusiasm for Corot and Courbet." In the old days, colours had the power of yielding secrets, but he wondered if this was true today. When I asked him what he meant by this, he explained that good

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colours were hard to find, and permitting himself a glance at his Fauve pictures, he emphasised that the colours used then had not altered in any appreciable way since they were placed on the canvas.

Colour led Derain to talk of the National Gallery and the cleaning. Although certain improvements had occurred, the results on the whole were disastrous. In his view Velasquez's *Portrait of Philip IV* (which one he failed to say) was a shadow of its former self. "I don't wish to sound as if I'm moping about the old days," Derain went on, "but the museums are not as pleasurable to visit now as in the past. Consider only the Louvre, where so many new brooms have swept clean, with the result that a certain disenchantment has occurred." What was true of museums was no less true of exhibitions. There were far too many and they were not prepared with sufficient skill; an exhibition, like a fine dish, required a master chef to give it the right flavour. Another trouble about exhibitions was that they lessened the shock of surprise that works of art could give the spectator. With so much on view and so little left to discover, something of the mystery of the unexpected disappeared. When Derain talked of the old masters I realised that the description of him as an artist of the museums was well earned; had he not once declared, "*Que gagne-t-on à manquer de culture?*" In fact, he was eager to combine appreciation of the old masters and of ancient art—the true baggage of the connoisseur—with a desire for spontaneity and "originality" of sensation in his own work.

"Enough, Madame," said Derain, turning to my wife. "You have not only come to hear me talk, but to look at pictures, and then we will have tea." Thereupon we mounted to a large untidy studio, crammed with canvases and such mementos of the past as mandolines. As he saw me looking at these early pictures and the objects hanging on the walls, he explained that he preserved such souvenirs in order to give him an appetite for work, when he set to in the morning.

"You know," he said, "unless one feels in the mood it is often better to refrain from working; by stopping, one often avoids spoiling the canvas." As he showed us some of his recent works—small landscapes with tall trees touched in with silvery grey tones—he emphasised that these were sketches rather than finished works, in which he had endeavoured to capture the freshness of an impression. Downstairs another room was cumbered with a large number of canvases, many of which dated from recent years: nudes, still life, and landscapes proved that Derain had not been inactive. The room was as burly and comfortable as Derain himself; and we noticed, too, a pile of records, some of which were of Chinese music, and an organ. Nor was this all. Now, he said, you must come to my secret studio. We reached this by traversing the garden with its pond and goats. Here were housed some of his early sculpture and the curious masks which he fashioned out of shell cases in or just after the First World War. A particular surprise was the large and unfinished composition of *The Return of Ulysses*, which he had begun in 1931. After a hearty tea (Derain and Madame Derain drank their tea laced with rum), we took our leave. The image remained of Derain as a patriarchal figure waving goodbye, courteous and warm-hearted, but yet remote.

DERAIN'S attitude was a highly individual one and he went his own way regardless of the consequences. In some respects, he was one of the most puzzling and paradoxical painters of the generation that formed the École de Paris. When one remembers the excitement that his first works aroused and that in the 1920's he was considered almost as a successor to Cézanne, his last years and his reduced reputation strike a melancholy note. This lack of interest in his work was partly due to the artist himself, who lived a retired existence. He preferred to be withdrawn. He rarely sent pictures to exhibitions and no steady procession of retrospectives, circulating from country to country, kept his name before the public. In fact, he was virtually a forgotten man until the recent revival of *Fauvisme*, with which he was closely identified, directed attention, not to his development as a whole, but to his glamorous years as the companion of Matisse and Vlaminck.

Yet the contrast between the radiance of his Fauve pictures, which are surely amongst the most subtle landscapes of the period, and the sombre aspect of his later style, must express a radical and significant change of heart on his part. Derain's various statements on

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painting reveal in fact that his adoption of a particular standpoint was not fortuitous; rather, it stemmed from a reasoned approach to the arts, one based on his assessment of the situation, as he saw it, in the years just before and after the First World War. Having tasted the liberties implied in *Fauvisme* and observed the possibilities inherent in cubism, he renounced these paths in favour of an attitude which seemed at the time to be old-fashioned and even "reactionary." What is so paradoxical about Derain's situation, however, is that his approach to painting, which may be related to the realist current, is now adopted by many of the avant-garde, even if for different reasons.

Derain's ability to hint at this "reaction" and even to suggest ranges of experience that tended to become submerged at a period of technical experiment, essential though it then was, is implicit in much of his post-Fauve painting. It may be observed, for instance, in the *Two Sisters* (1914) in the State Museum at Copenhagen. It is not that the painting contains a message, exhorting us to take up arms on behalf of a cause or even to share in the exhilarating passion of the moment; by means of blocked-in forms and pale washes of paint, a particular mood is rendered: that of the despair which corrodes those who cannot or will not join in, and who quiver on the outside or the outskirts, in fear of what the future so demonstrably holds for them.

Derain was obsessed by what seemed to him to be the collapse of civilisation in our era, and he was, at bottom, one of those highly intellectual artists who are unable to accommodate themselves to a new epoch, and to the demands of public taste. He lacked the resilience to move with the times, and was forced—as no other way was open to him—to adhere to the tradition which he revered. Not that this meant that he was closed to experiment, and his early interest in negro art, for instance, was a sign of his open-minded attitude; but, at the same time, he was pessimistic as to the consequences and implications of the modern world. His painting, no less than his personality, was at variance with those of his early friends; and consequently both are of some importance for an understanding of the present complex interaction of forces. Indeed, his ideas and contribution are surely a reminder of the difficulties of precisely defining the artistic trends of any one period.

DERAIN is criticised for his refusal or inability to create a truly personal style, or rather one that was strikingly novel. Yet it might be more exact to say that he combined in his own works certain elements from the past and gave them an individual interpretation. But he did so for precise reasons. Aware of his limitations, he was possessed by humility in front of the Old Masters. As a true conservative he preferred evolution to revolution. His own sense of insufficiency and his desire to remain within a tradition that seemed to him to be threatened by so much of the modern movement, made him suspicious of experiment that veered too far from what he considered to be the central course. Hence he wished to check, as it were, his own art by reference to that of the past. Consequently he was often on the edge of pastiche and at times slipped over the frontier. It might be argued against him, too, that his refusal to experiment more bravely in the cubist style (for only a wan reflection of its discoveries occurs in his painting) was a sign of weakness and of a failure to be "modern." But it was surely an indication of strength. He did not venture in this direction because he felt it alien to his own temperament; had he done so he might have been no more than an epigone of the moment. On the contrary, he preferred, as Apollinaire pointed out, to attempt the conciliation of daring and discipline. At a time when liberty was verging on anarchy—surely one of the "messages" of the 20th century—he fastened on those aspects of reality to which he could give solid expression. His awareness of the apparent breakdown of one cycle of civilisation—evident in his *L'Age d'Or* (1904–5)—made him cling, all the more fervently, to the tangible world; thus his affection for the still life and for stark opaque colour.

His work as a whole contains not so much a series of major paintings which break the rules or open fresh vistas as a succession of single pictures in which certain precise problems are posed and settled. Derain's range of subject matter was not wide, and generally, he preferred to embellish the same themes. The pleasure that can be derived from his painting is a simple, if sophisticated, one. It consists of savouring the "feel" of his paint

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and of observing the ability with which he could capture the play of light on a neck, render the grey and black tones of a landscape, the sweep and growth of trees, or suggest the structure of contours. His effects are not thrust under our eyes with the éclat of novelty; they are to be slowly discovered; they demand, one might even suggest, an absence of prejudice. It is because Derain shunned an obviously "modern" style that his achievement appears suspect.

THE recent exhibition at the Musée d'Art Moderne and still more so the choice anthology at the Galerie Charpentier which introduced a number of little-known pictures, confirmed the strength of Derain's position. If he rarely managed the great portraits he hoped to paint, certain of his studies of women—the *Two Sisters* at Copenhagen or the *Madame Derain* of 1927—possess a refinement of colour and a sense of desolation, of melancholy even, rarely to be encountered in modern portrait painting. They revealed his insight into the workings of certain natures. Even his commissioned portraits, usually of elegant and beautiful women to whom he responded with enthusiasm (few modern painters have delighted so much as Derain in the sensuality of flesh), demonstrate that his standard was not debased by circumstance; and some are stamped with the invincible charm and observant brevity of the 18th century. But Derain could not only paint a fashionable beauty or investigate the rotund forms of a model; he could group figures in such a way as to suggest a particular state of mind. His rare portrait groups of the later years, which owed something to the inspiration of Græco-Roman art, are distinguished in general by their warm Venetian tones; they impose themselves on the eye with an instantaneousness of effect, as if we surprise the sitters at their inner deliberations; as their personalities become familiar to us they convey that note of anxiety and of perplexity which places Derain close to the mannerists.

One of the problems which obsessed Derain in his later years was to discover how to combine successfully a proper cultivation of tradition with the deployment of his own "primitive" reaction. He needed a sense of companionship with the past, a feeling of continuity, but at the same time he realised its dangers in preventing an "original" contribution. His dilemma was a real one when experiment was frequently considered to be the touchstone of artistic quality, and his predicament is now understood by more painters than when he faced its consequences. He was an artist of "doubt," in the sense that André Gide was, and his art, for all its robust manner, is consequently tinged with a certain sadness. Yet by avoiding the spectacular, which may tarnish quickly, he captured the magic of the ordinary. His landscapes, his nudes, his flower pieces, and his translucent or highly charged still-life pictures possess an originality in the paint—if not always in the composition—that is not to be denied.

If Derain's painting failed in recent years to appeal to critical opinion, its influence on younger artists none the less proved considerable. In the 1930's men such as Tal Coat, Humblot, and Rohner, who formed the "Forces Nouvelles" group, hailed him as a patron saint; that he stirred Balthus is apparent not only from this painter's revealing portrait of him; and both Gruber and Giacometti, who can hardly be dismissed as "reactionary," owed much to his example at certain moments in their careers.

Derain, in fact, has shown that an artist can relinquish the "advanced" styles of his own generation in order to measure himself against the masters of the past, and yet, paradoxically, appear in the eyes of members of a younger generation more relevant for the future than his "revolutionary" contemporaries.

Denys Sutton

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Comment

Unacknowledged Quotation

SINCE reading a poem called *At Chelsea* by Hilary Corke in your July issue, I have been wondering at what point in recent literary history unacknowledged quotation became an accepted substitute for creation? Is it not a little too hard on the young reader to expect him to know that the lines:

(And) through the glass window shines
the sun
How should I love, and I so young?

were written in the 15th and not in the 20th century?

MARGARET RAWLINGS

Wendover
Buckinghamshire

[*Mr. Corke replies:*

THE quotation was unacknowledged precisely because I imagined it to be pretty widely known: Miss Rawlings's letter would seem to show that I was right.

If Miss Rawlings had cared to pursue her researches a little further, she could also have demonstrated that, of my remaining two poems, one was written "around" a suppressed Shakespeare-quotation ("The singing masons building roofs of gold"), and the other as a passage from Daguileville's *Pèlerinage de la Vie Humaine*—which was written in the 14th and not in the 20th century. But her conclusion that such quotation is a substitute for creation, rather than raw material or theme for it, is a little hasty. The musical parallel should at once show its absurdity: *naughty* Brahms, for writing variations upon a "theme of Haydn" instead of buckling down to create one of his own! . . .

As to the subject of Miss Rawlings's *wonder* (ingenuous or false-ingenuous), this is hardly the place for a comfy little academic chat on basic literary principles; but the short answer is, I suppose, that since the publication of *The Waste-land* in 1922, poets have shown an especial interest in the proper exploitation of quotation. But the practice is, of course, as old as poetry. All the English poets have indulged in it and, if hoarier examples are wanted, one has only to reflect that Virgil incorporates whole lines from his predecessor Ennius and translates hundreds directly from Homer, who in his turn has evidently borrowed hundreds from those anonymous ones who went before him. And if Miss Rawlings cares to examine the marginal glosses to her Bible, she will find Obadiah swiping tasty little bits out of Ezekiel (or could it be *vice versa*?); and so on, *ad infinitum*. . . .

Men and Ideas: Malthus

I DON'T want to defend Malthus—scarcely an interesting occupation these days: but since it is important for all our futures that the Arts set and the Mathematics department should understand each other, may I take up some of your space in examining Miss Himmelfarb's treatment of figures in your August issue?

"The myth that figures don't lie," writes Miss Himmelfarb. Figures don't lie. Neither do logic, history or the camera; but some people's use and interpretation of these things do. Miss Himmelfarb knows this perfectly well, as one sees when she quotes the dishonest advertisement of the butter which is "sixty-four per cent purer." (Naturally, she hasn't said that this is an example of figures lying, but she has called their not lying a "myth"—in the vernacular = an unfounded belief—and presents this as an apparently relevant example; so . . . we are all expected to be buyers of her intellectual butter. A supposititious air? Yes.)

Next point. The proportion of population to food in three centuries should have been not 4,096 : 13 but 8,192 : 13—"a margin of error more impressive than the figures themselves." This is not true. A proportion known to be of the order of thousands to teens is a very different proposition from one known to be of the order of hundreds to scores, or of millions to one—ask any pools punter—and an error of several hundred per cent will not invalidate its general significance, informativeness, and perhaps usefulness. "Shorn of its figures and reduced to mere words" (note the irony, indicating that words are better conveyors of the idea of relative sizes than figures unless the figures are accurate to hundreds of decimal places) "—no longer '4,096 : 13' but only the unexciting 'more' and 'less'—the formula loses its magical potency. . . ." This is one of the important lacunae in the range

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of verbal meaning, and one which the word-orientated nearly always miss. There are several orders of magnitude between, say, 13:20, 13:200, and 13:4,096, all easily *felt* and understood by most normal people, and all equally covered by the "unexciting 'more' and 'less' "—or even by "very much more." For surely even Miss Himmelfarb will agree that if in two or three centuries at any given rate of change the ratio of meals-available to meals-required is likely to be 13 : 20, then this can safely be left to the ingenuity of posterity; but if it seems likely that the proportion is going to be 13:8,192 (or even 13:4,096), then it might be worth while at any rate writing a book about it. And yet both of these eventualities are covered by the "unexciting 'more.' "

There are, of course, those who do think of figures as magic (I believe Miss Himmelfarb must once have been one of them) and they are apt to suffer quite traumatic shocks on discovering some more or less impressive but inessential error in a statement made in a confident tone; glaring at the feet of clay now appallingly revealed they draw their vorpa swords and rush at the continuum of numbers, hewing madly in all four dimensions (see the contemptuous "so much for his vaunted facts and figures" with which Miss Himmelfarb dismisses Malthus's modest and necessary avowal that his sources were bound to be incomplete and not always accurate).

The world, it seems, is moving into a period in which numbers are going to play an increasing part in human life and organisation. If we wish to avoid being tyrannised over by the manipulators of numbers we really must bring ourselves to accept a more sophisticated understanding of these dangerous things. "You can prove anything with figures" is only a slight variation on "figures cannot be made to lie," and the rejection of a whole argument on the strength of a few inaccuracies is not much better. Anyway, the really deceptive, dangerous, and treacherous presentations almost never have odd little things like one hundred per cent errors in them. Substitute "logic" for "numbers" or "figures" in this letter, and see how unmagical and normal the whole thing is; yet at the time of the emergence of the human mind from the myth-making stage logic must have seemed as dangerous and misleading a process as statistics, and figures generally, do to some people now; and the development we are faced with now is really only a refinement. . . .

Words have been for a long time the current coin, the passport really, of the educated and governing classes: in our brave new world, numbers will have to share this position.

RONALD VINCENT SMITH

London, W.C.2

The American Intellectuals

MR. CUNLIFFE's summary of the intellectual life in the United States (June 1955) is quite brilliant: it is fast, easy, and accurate in almost every detail. Much of what he says has been said before, but not all at once and not so balanced. If one were to find fault with it, it would be mainly because summaries—I mean summaries, not generalisations—tend to flatten out a subject and permit only certain kinds of distinctions.

For example: I do not think the Hiss case or the problem of Communism has much to do with the place of the intellectual in the United States, at least not in the way Mr. Cunliffe has posed the question and the way I should like to see it discussed. Nor is the intellectual turn against Communism relevant, unless Mr. Cunliffe wants to make the point that this was a way of making peace with society, but then that would imply that the only reason for breaking with Communism is to become respectable again. . . . Nor is the number of psychoanalysts in New York a key to the avant-garde: all it indicates, I would think, is that every form of medicine flourishes in the U.S. and that a certain number of Americans can afford psychoanalysis. . . .

Mr. Cunliffe is one of the few observers who has caught the mixed character of the American "intelligentsia." If one takes only one side, as many writers have, it is very easy to get pushed into some absurdity, such as that American intellectuals are conformist, or non-conformist, academic, anti-intellectual, sex-crazy, homosexual, utilitarian, alienated, chauvinist, radical, etc. Nor is it more illuminating to say that they are all these things, without at least suggesting the proportions. The phenomenon of mass culture—the key, I think, to American culture—is also quite confusing; and Mr. Cunliffe aptly describes as "levelling-up and levelling-down" the ambiguities of feeding more culture to more people, better, cheaper, and more palatable.

I especially like Mr. Cunliffe's use of the distinction between a "clerisy" and an "avant-garde," since it takes in the dual function of the intellectual classes. Perhaps the name, "intellectual," should not be used to describe both functions, though they do overlap and usually are performed by the same person. The fact is that most of the intelligentsia takes on the task of thinking correctly, practically, responsibly, and of transmitting the accumulated knowledge. This intellectual majority includes the intellectual technicians, such as the scientists (both natural and social), the scholars, and the "scientific" thinkers; those who sell intellectual services, and who accept most of the traditional values, like educators, journalists, and most

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philosophers; and the writers and critics who supply the market. This intellectual army really keeps our civilisation going. On the other hand, there are the radicals who are usually associated with left-wing politics or with the arts, and they tend to see themselves as an intellectual—and moral—minority, an élite in opposition to the rest of society or simply outside it. Obviously it is this group that produces new ideas and new art.

To complicate things further, much of what we call mass culture has its own styles and themes, distinct from "high," or "serious," or avant-garde art. As a result, we have really two cultures, serving different audiences and purposes, competing with each other, each with its own creators and spokesmen, though, of course, there is much overlapping, influence, and confusion. One might call this culture-for-the-mass low or middlebrow or *Kitsch*, popular or commercial, and then quibble over the definition; but the fact is that there it is, and in the past the avant-garde has usually deplored not only its effect, but its very existence, while more respectable and optimistic thinkers have found in mass culture all kinds of hidden values and benefits.

Now in these respects I do not believe the United States is discontinuous with Europe, as both the old and the new world have felt the cultural effects of industrial democracy and universal education. The difference—or discontinuity—lies in the fact that the cultural bureaucracy, or "clerisy," as Mr. Cunliffe calls it, in the United States is so much stronger and more hostile to the avant-garde than it is in Europe, and, ironically, both groups in the United States are less stable, less confident, more anti-intellectual. The similarities between America and Europe are often lost sight of because the levelling up and down, the tailoring and taming of talent, takes place on a seemingly higher level in Europe. . . .

Anyway, let us not forget that all this has to do only with the sociology of art, which has but the most general bearing on individual talent. Otherwise, one might fall into the easy assumption that favourable conditions create good art, and this is only one step from assuming that we know what these conditions are, and then comes the crusading for the ideal creative situation, which is probably the most useless and boring of all cultural activities. If we are going to improve society, let us at least not do it for the sake of art.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS

New York City

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BOOKS

Burke in America

INTELLECTUAL fashions change (fortunately); and it is useful from time to time to report on the new moods stealing over the American intellectual community. A striking recent development, along with the upsurge of the new criticism and the old-time religion, has been the emergence of the politico-intellectual movement known as the New Conservatism. Bright young men who once read Paine, Jefferson, and Mill are now reading Burke, Adams, and Disraeli. University common rooms, instead of echoing with excited talk about the need for reform and change, now echo with excited talk about the need for tradition and continuity. Where young people two decades ago were automatically members of what Emerson called the Party of the Future, now some—and not seldom the most sensitive and thoughtful among them—are eagerly enlisting in the Party of the Past.

This is no doubt a predictable phenomenon in an age when the past looks so much better than the future, when memory becomes more consoling than hope. It is also surely a predictable phenomenon in a nation when the conservative party, after years in the wilderness, has achieved a return to political power. Indeed, the practical impulse behind this effort at conservative theorising is obviously the desire to reconstruct an American conservative tradition and thereby to equip our new rulers with a political philosophy.

The New Conservatism has had thus far a variety of prophets; on the whole, it may be said, the leaders probably outnumber the followers. For a sympathetic survey of the conservative revival, one can do no better than to turn to Professor Clinton Rossiter's new book.* For further elaboration of two polar possibilities of conservatism, Russell Kirk's *A Program for Conservatives** and Gordon Harrison's *Road to the Right*† should be examined. And for a penetrating if oblique comment on the whole dilemma of American conservatism, one must read Professor Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America.*‡

MR. ROSSITER'S book is unassuming and discriminating, written in excellent temper, and animated by a desire to make the conservative revival less individualistic and apoplectic and more coherent and constructive than it has been in the past. One of his crucial distinctions is between what he terms Conservatism (upper case) and conservatism (lower case); and this distinction is of great importance in assaying the broad prospects of the conservative revival. By "Conservatism," Mr. Rossiter means the high philosophical principles of the conservative tradition of the West—the faith in stability, order, duty, hierarchy, property, community, reverence, tradition, religion. By "conservatism," he means the series of practical positions assumed by those American political leaders and parties with a stake in the *status quo* and a desire to block reform and change. It is his thesis that Conservatism and conservatism were more or less identical in the United States until about 1840; that they were split asunder, first by the opportunism of the Whigs and then by *laissez-faire* dogmatism of the Republicans; and that the hope for a new conservatism which might

* *Conservatism in America.* By CLINTON ROSSITER. Alfred A. Knopf. $4.00.

* *A Program for Conservatives.* By RUSSELL KIRK. Henry Regnery. $4.00.

† *Road to the Right.* By GORDON HARRISON. William Morrow. $4.50.

‡ *The Liberal Tradition in America.* By LOUIS HARTZ. Harcourt Brace. $4.75.

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sustain the republic in the dark years ahead rests in effecting some sort of reconciliation between the two variants of the conservative creed.

Russell Kirk and Gordon Harrison appear as convenient examples of Mr. Rossiter's basic distinction. For Mr. Kirk is the most passionate contemporary exponent of Conservatism in the exalted philosophical sense (though he would carry it to extremes which Mr. Rossiter would deem irrelevant and inadmissible for the United States), while Mr. Harrison takes the downright and no-nonsense position that American conservatism is what practical conservatives have said and done in American history, and nothing more. For Mr. Kirk, there is only Conservatism; for Mr. Harrison there is only conservatism.

The difference comes out signally in their contrasting views of the relation of the businessman to conservatism. For Mr. Harrison, the hard facts are inescapable. "To write about conservative politics in America," he says, "is to chronicle the political performance of business." For Mr. Kirk, on the other hand, the relationship between business and Conservatism is highly tenuous. He thus writes of the businessman: "Although I hope we may count upon his intelligent support, increasingly, of a reflective conservatism, we should be silly to expect him to lead us in politics." Indeed, Mr. Kirk adds astonishingly, "Money, and most respectable media of communication, still are on the side of the liberals and radicals."

THE divergence reflects the contrast in the tone and temper of the books. The title of Mr. Kirk's book is, of course, a misnomer. Republican congressmen wanting to know whether they should raise or lower the interest rate or what they should do about the farm price support system are not advised to consult *A Program for Conservatives*. Programmatic suggestions, it is true, can be extracted from it: Mr. Kirk thus feels that we injured our political order by adopting universal suffrage, direct primaries, and the popular election of Senators; he sees in the school lunch programme a "vehicle for totalitarianism"; he declares that the social security system "bears nearly all the marks of a remorseless collectivism"; he contends that the United Auto Workers "has scarcely any more element of volition in it than the most arbitrary totalitarian state." And, from other sources, we know that Mr. Kirk feels that Mr. Charles E. (General Electric) Wilson's desocialisation programme, by which the government would dispose of the TVA, the Columbia River development, Hoover Dam, and other public projects to private investors, would be "the most important reversal of the drift towards a repressive collectivism which any nation has experienced in many years"; it is "conservatism intelligently applied to our present discontents."

Nonetheless Mr. Kirk avows his pervading lack of interest in programmatic detail. Yet is not this very lack of interest itself symptomatic? Indeed, for all his invocation of the concrete and the historical, Mr. Kirk is a visionary and ideologue of a rather radical sort. As he preaches the need for humility with unquenchable arrogance, so he resorts to abstract argument in order to show the evil of abstractions and demands moderation in the most immoderate possible way. He writes with prophetic conviction ("I attest the rising generation"), lays about him with righteous wrath ("when a man is both a professor and an intellectual, he is loathsome; when he is professor and intellectual and ideologist rolled into one, he is unbearable"), and expounds his gospel in tones that are variously dogmatic, sarcastic, scolding, witty, oracular, penetrating, and inspiring.

If conservatism has anything to do with the interpretation of experience, then Mr. Kirk's conservatism bears little relation to the realities of the American past or the American present. His idol is Burke, and his whole effort is to uproot Burke's philosophy and to transplant it to exotic soil, climate, water, and air in another century. Mr. Kirk is the philosophical equivalent of the Californian wine growers who thought that the transplantation of a few French vine stocks would enable First Growth Médocs to be produced in the Napa Valley. One need hardly point out that this is a profoundly unconservative theory.

IF Mr. Kirk's Conservatism represents one part of Mr. Rossiter's dilemma, Mr. Harrison's conservatism represents the other. Where Mr. Kirk is evangelical, Mr. Harrison is detached and ironic; where Mr. Kirk is

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abstract, Mr. Harrison is concrete; where Mr. Kirk deals in the Conservative dream, Mr. Harrison deals in the conservative reality. His history of the conservative past is a history of business in politics, told with a cogency of address and often a brilliance of phrase that make *Road to the Right* both lively and rewarding reading. Mr. Harrison has clearly a superior historical talent, if only a somewhat subdued sense of political mission.

The contrast between *A Program for Conservatives* and *Road to the Right* points up Mr. Rossiter's dilemma in *Conservatism in America*. Is conservatism a high-flying philosophical faith? or is it simply what businessmen do in politics? Mr. Kirk, the Conservative, discredits his noble and eloquent declarations by his bundle of absurd and reactionary practical suggestions. Mr. Harrison, on the other hand, concludes briskly that the future of American conservatism has to be the extrapolation of its past, and that the only hope lies in developing the business philosophy so as to make it relevant and attractive to all groups disposed to put their primary trust in tradition and slow evolution. Mr. Rossiter obviously recoils from Mr. Kirk; but Mr. Harrison, with his belief in the business base of American conservatism, does not offer him quite enough. For Mr. Rossiter the wistful hope remains of infusing American conservatism with enough Conservatism to make it a genuinely public philosophy and not simply the ideology of a class.

But how is this to be done? What must the policies of an enlightened and responsible conservatism be? The New Conservatism, Mr. Rossiter writes, "calls, first of all, for abandonment of the campaign of fierce anti-statism that has served the nation ill and the conservative not half so well as he thinks." If this comes first, there seems hardly much point in listening to the rest of Mr. Rossiter's list! It is hard to believe that most practical conservatives in the United States would not reject this and most of the rest of the Rossiter programme with horror as abysmal "me-tooism." Mr. Harrison similarly believes that "the conservative interest lies in keeping government strong and effective." In substance, the Harrison-Rossiter brand of conservatism, in terms of the current political spectrum, would be about equivalent to the moderate New Dealism of Senators like Fulbright of Arkansas and Monroney of Oklahoma, and far to the left of the views of all Republican Senators except perhaps Case of New Jersey. Mr. Rossiter, indeed, ruefully cites the "unsettling fact" that a majority of American Conservatives (upper case) voted in 1952 "the way they had voted for years: for the party and at least some of the principles of Franklin D. Roosevelt."

But might there not be more hope today, with conservatism chastened and sobered by political responsibility, that conservative politicians will listen to conservative intellectuals, as liberal politicians have listened to liberal intellectuals? Perhaps; but the indications so far are not cheering. The statistics of President Eisenhower's stag dinners (until the White House stopped releasing the guest lists) showed that he had entertained about as many football coaches as he had scholars; and one retains the impression that, for our likeable President, the name Burke is likely to mean only the man who won the United States Open in 1931. As Edmund Wilson a generation ago proposed taking Communism away from the Communists, so, Philip Rahv has suggested, the problem which confronts Mr. Rossiter and his followers today is that of taking conservatism away from the conservatives.

Indeed, some of the New Conservatives, after a look at practical conservatism, have latterly forsaken politics altogether, except to vote Democratic in national elections, and have dedicated themselves instead to the continuation of the struggle by other means. Mr. Peter Viereck, for example, has wisely concluded that "in America the conservative today can best start by being unpolitical"—that the New Conservatism must be primarily a cultural, ethical, and educational movement.

Much serious thought, much decency of temper, much earnestness of hope have gone into the revival of a conservative politics. Why, then, does it persist in having the quality of a hothouse plant, grown under artificial conditions and incapable of surviving the blasts and chills of normal American life? The answer to this is partly suggested by Mr. Louis Hartz's *The Liberal Tradition in America*. This brilliantly suggestive essay operates on a level of profundity far deeper than the other books under discussion. What

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Mr. Hartz has attempted is a fundamental reinterpretation of the American political development; and, though much of the book will seem perverse or exaggerated to other students, there can be no doubt that this work will leave its mark on America's picture of itself for years to come.

Mr. Hartz's basic insight is the fact that American society skipped the feudal stage of history, and that this absence of a feudal background explains more than anything else the peculiarities of the American development. Never experiencing feudalism, the American never experienced catastrophic revolution against feudalism. Never experiencing this revolution, he has never been susceptible either to reaction or to socialism. We have thus been, from the start, a liberal society; Locke, as adapted for the American experience, remains the brooding presence of American politics. Sometimes Americans, forgetting their basic similarities in the heat of partisan battle, have plunged "into the shadow world of their own social conflict"; too often, progressive historians, taking the cries of battle as descriptions of social reality, have perpetuated the illusion of violent difference. But none of this, Mr. Hartz believes, can erase the historical reality of a deep, instinctive Lockianism—a faith in an open society, based on liberty and property—common to all Americans.

Much requires to be said about the Hartz book. He surely explains altogether too much by his thesis; one feels in the end that anything—a fact or its opposite—can be absorbed by paradox or by dialectic into the Hartzian scheme. His mode of argument is often cryptic and elliptic. His basic conception of Lockianism remains largely undefined. And the book is very much the product of a contemporary mood. It would have been of great value in the thirties, when Americans overdramatised their internal differences. But its invocation of consensus becomes almost supererogatory today, when too many Americans have come to resent and suspect the fact of difference. Moreover, he underestimates the role that social struggle has played in the development of America. It is doubtless true, as Jefferson said, that we are all Republicans, all Federalists; yet somehow Jackson and Webster, Bryan and McKinley, Roosevelt and Hoover, were not identical; and the differences between the two traditions represent a fundamental difference in American life. One wonders whether the author's confidence in his Lockian unity would be so robust, say, if we had seven million unemployed, hunger marchers in the streets, and a do-nothing government!

STILL, none of these objections, I think, affects the brilliant success with which Mr. Hartz, bringing to American history a knowledge of European political thought possessed by few American historians, has established a new perspective on the American experience. So far as the New Conservatism is concerned, Mr. Hartz's thesis about feudalism makes it abundantly clear, I think, why Burkean Conservatism has never found roots in the United States. "The ironic flaw in American liberalism," Mr. Hartz writes, "lies in the fact that we have never had a real conservative tradition." Where Mr. Rossiter believes that Federalism represented American conservatism at its finest hour and that the conservative intelligence disintegrated after 1840, Mr. Hartz regards the Federalists as the champions of a rigid and unrealistic class theory of American society and feels that American conservatism only started to make sense in 1840. Where Mr. Rossiter suggests that post-Civil War Republicanism was the degradation of conservatism, Mr. Hartz argues that conservatism finally began to come of age in the United States when it committed itself to liberal doctrines of expanding opportunity in the day of Carnegie and Horatio Alger. Liberalism is our single tradition, Mr. Hartz contends; our ideological debates have been sham battles; our hope lies in comprehending the basis of our unity and transcending it.

With high conservatism thus excluded by history, all we have left is practical conservatism—the conservatism, not of the professors, but of the industrialists, the financiers, and the politician. Can this transform itself into a national and public philosophy? Or is that old Tory, Dr. Samuel Johnson, still right in his old conviction?—"A merchant's desire is not of glory, but of gain, not of public wealth, but of private emolument; he is, therefore, rarely to be consulted on questions of war or peace, or any designs of wide extent and distant consequence."

Possibly Dr. Johnson was wrong. But, if

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American conservatism, tethered as it is for all practical purposes to its business base, can disprove liberal scepticism and live up to the lofty hopes the New Conservatives have for it, it surely will have no better chance to demonstrate the reality of this regeneration than today. The returns are not yet in; but, reading between the lines, one suspects that even the New Conservatives feel that there is still some distance to go.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

HITLER LEADS TO HIROSHIMA

As a rule the origins of wars grow difficult to understand. This is a very extraordinary fact because unless the purpose of a war is easily understood, and agreed to, the war will be difficult to wage. This is as true of old dynastic wars as of modern "people's wars," and one might reasonably suppose that, even allowing for changes in human mood and preoccupation, the motive power of any feeling which caused armies to assemble and allowed men to face death heroically would never grow obscure. Yet the opposite is what usually happens. Not so immensely long after the event, it needs all Sir Winston Churchill's literary skill to persuade us of the inevitability of the wars against Louis XIV. Tolstoy had to seek grotesque theories of mass-movement to account for 1812. Until I read Mr. de Grunwald's *Nicholas I* I had never faintly understood the origins of the Crimean War, in spite of frequent study and familiarity with *Punch* and "Maud."

The cause of the tragedy of 1914 becomes less easy to understand the more deeply it is studied. This can give a clue. War demands furious passions and the seeing of things in black and white. But things are never black or white, only appear thus. Honest examination and the sentence of time must reveal mixed motives, and virtues and vices unconsciously blended: both sides in the right, and both in the wrong. This conclusion, however, sounds a little too smug to be tolerated, and the events of August and September 1939 *do* prove it intolerable.

Dr. Walther Hofer's book *War Premeditated: 1939** is not only a very able and compelling piece of research but is a portent of modern feeling in Germany. The author is a Swiss and at present occupies the chair of modern history in the Free University of Berlin. His book was published in Stuttgart in its original German last year and was well received. Regard for sales makes many of our newspapers stress the Nazism which still lingers defiantly in Germany (an inevitable consequence of indoctrination and defeat), so that we hear little of the reaction against Nazism which from much evidence is the strongest element in the present German disposition. Nothing could testify better to such a state of things than this deeply studied German condemnation of the Nazi policy which unleashed World War II. It is not an examination of the causes of the war in the larger sense, but of the machinery which set it in motion. An immense field has been covered, all in published material, but in a quantity which makes further discovery (except of trifles) improbable.

It is not possible to see, after reading it, where any effective Nazi apologia could proceed from. During the not wholly disagreeable days of the "phoney war" I once had an interesting conversation in Cambridge with a historian of deserved renown. I asked him what he thought future men would say of the justice of our cause. He replied that he could not imagine that they would ever see a flaw in it, but he added that he was a little dashed to remember that when he joined up in 1914 he seemed to himself to be joining an entirely blameless side in opposition to an entirely black one, and that twenty years of study had so modified this view that he now felt very nearly neutral about German war guilt. He was aware that he might again be forced into

* *War Premeditated: 1939*. By Walther Hofer. Thames and Hudson. 16s.

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modifying his whole-hearted approval of his side. I am sure that he has not had to undertake any subsequent readjustment. This book written from within Germany proves, if nothing else does, that World War II was forced on the world. The known facts retain very much the outline that they were given in British newspaper and radio reports of the time. It is not too bold to say that the reason why World War II broke out will never be obscure because Hitler's criminality will never be open to debate.

THERE are surprises for the general reader. It is usually supposed that Hitler was indifferent to Italian participation, but Italian non-belligerency came as a severe shock to him and Ribbentrop. It also seems that there was some intrigue on the German side to keep the Italians out and thus lessen the chance of war: when the Italians were asked to specify their war-requirements, the German ambassador in Rome, von Mackensen, secretly urged Ciano to make a list so long that it could not be agreed to. The Italian defection caused much and understandable rage in Berlin, but the curious fact remains that Hitler did not lose his admiration for Mussolini thereby. Although at one point in August 1939 he suggested to Sir Neville Henderson that an Anglo-German alliance against Italy might solve the question of British participation in a German-Polish war, Hitler seems to have had as much genuine loyalty and affection towards Mussolini as was compatible with his poisonous character. Of the temporary breakdown of the Axis Dr. Hofer remarks with wit: "It is not without irony that the pact of steel failed to function owing to a lack of steel."

The choice between peace and war was for a madman to decide, but we can see from the Italian affair that things did not all go the way the madman wanted, certainly not to the extent usually supposed. Ribbentrop's greatest coup, the Russo-German agreement, proved an instant disappointment. It was primarily supposed to cause the governments of France and England to fall, when they would be replaced by governments bent on peace at any price; but the only Government which did fall as a result was the Japanese one! Among the oddest things to happen was Hitler's sudden panic on receiving news that the British-Polish alliance had been formally concluded

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on the 25th of August. This was only a formality, of small interest compared to the original announcement of the British guarantee, yet Hitler and Ribbentrop experienced such an extremity of cold feet when the news arrived that the secret orders for the invasion of Poland on the 26th were cancelled. Presumably this was the first proof positive that the Russo-German agreement was not doing its work, and the possibility of defeat appeared momentarily to the power-drunk men in Berlin. It is bitter for the English reader to have to realise how swiftly the Nazis might have been defeated if we and our ally had been as prepared and efficient as Hitler thought we were. He entered the war in a Götterdämerung spirit.

Hundreds of British and French blunders had enabled Hitler to get where he did—that is generally agreed; it has become a truism. What is less generally appreciated is the sagacity and sense of responsibility of Neville Chamberlain's government, notably of his Foreign Secretary, during the last phase before war. What few ways remained to preserve the peace were kept open with skill and courage, and opinions against this, even informed ones such as those of Ambassador Kennedy, are so blind as to suggest that they are interested. In only one scene of the last act do the Allied ministers seem to have shown themselves lacking in a sense of the needs of the time, and that was with Hitler's last, apparently reasonable but certainly fraudulent, offer to Poland of a sixteen point programme of discussion. It should be remembered that this proposal was supposed to depend for acceptance on the Poles' appointing a fully accredited negotiator, but in so brief a time as to make negotiations unlikely to take place. Why did not Lord Halifax and Monsieur Bonnet insist on the Polish Ambassador in Berlin, Joseph Lipski, being so appointed before his last interview with Ribbentrop? This is not to suggest that such a move could have saved peace for a day, but that in their omission they forgot the importance of political propaganda in the modern world. Like Russia's supposed wish to save the world during the Munich crisis (still believed in), Hitler's posturing as a thwarted negotiator was a propaganda drive which had the desired effect on many Germans and others. I remember an Englishman who was in Berlin at the time, but somehow got out at the last, who remained troubled in mind about the apparent unwillingness of the Poles and ourselves to take up the proposals until the evidence at the Nuremberg trials proved that the offer had been a cheat.

THE mention of that word Nuremberg can breed second thoughts. It was all very well for us to say that the enormity of the crimes committed by Hitler, Ribbentrop, Himmler, Goering, Kaltenbrunner, and the rest called for retribution, but there remains the awkward fact that we had said hundreds and thousands of times that we fought for the rule of law, and no amount of passion and sophistry could make the Nuremberg tribunal legal in any usual sense. There remains another awkward fact, in that we had remained on diplomatic terms with the accused at the time when, to our knowledge, they were committing their abominations, and we had not registered a protest on any scale which could imply the faintest possibility of a prosecution later. There was the foretold and since proved fact that Nuremberg would encourage political mock-trials elsewhere. There was also the loathsome record in civil persecution of the Russian judge. But over and above such embarrassments hung the appalling fact that shortly before the trials had opened the Allies had dropped a nuclear bomb over two Japanese cities, killing a vast number of human beings indiscriminately.

Doctor Michihiko Hachiya, director of the Hiroshima Communications Hospital, has written the only full eye-witness account of what happened on the ground when the deed was done.* Various eminent persons, headed by Bertrand Russell, have declared the book to be of paramount value. They refer, presumably, to a hope that it may deter politicians from action likely to lead to the further use of nuclear weapons. If horrors can do this, the book is certainly of value. The story is ghastly, notably where Dr. Hachiya describes a swimming pool packed with corpses and a few splashing survivors, but the book tells little that has not been divulged already. The famous special number of the *New Yorker* that contained John Hersey's *Hiroshima*, offered a more valuable collection of evidence.

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* *Hiroshima Diary*. By MICHIHIKO HACHIYA. Gollancz. 16s.

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What is of unique interest is the revelation of a Japanese view of the atrocity.

To most Westerners the worst thing about the bombing was that Hiroshima was very doubtfully a military target. People on the spot seem to have felt differently: here was a large Command Headquarters, and a troop assembly area, and several of the people whose sayings are recorded here regarded the strategic blow as the most terrible aspect of the disaster. The heroism of the Japanese is beyond compare, and the news of the surrender was received by the maimed wretches in Dr. Hachiya's hospital with violent rage and tears of national mortification. The familiar American argument that without the great bomb the war might have dragged on for many months at enormous expense of human life on both sides, is not the least contradicted by this account. Dr. Hachiya appals us anew, but he does not make us accuse ourselves anew.

Nevertheless the memories of Hiroshima and Nuremberg cannot sit easily together in any conscience. This fact may in time lead to the confusion which goes with cynicism about the desirability of a victory against the "Tokyo triangle," even though the beginning of World War II will probably remain clear. Whatever their political shortcomings on other occasions, Neville Chamberlain and Lord Halifax must always deserve gratitude because their conduct in the last days of peace enabled their countrymen and allies to enter the ordeals of war "strongly armed in honesty." It cannot be said that the more powerful and successful statesmen of 1945 incurred a similar debt when they confounded expediency and principle. Victory is the harder test.

Christopher Sykes

PAST AND PRESENT TENSE

COUNTRIES, like people, seem to become more like themselves as they grow older. It is easy in present-day France to feel that the bones are showing through the familiar charm. The small towns on the road to Paris look more slatternly, and after not only Sedan but Dien Bien Phu the Napoleonic pomp of inner Paris is yet more dated. The Champs Elysées with its plate glass and travel offices has become a mere tourists' street. Montmartre is a suburb, Montparnasse is dead. The boulevard scenes, with their drab 19th century façades, the pre-1914 cafés and shops, women with string bags, street stalls and street traffic, have come to have an aged look. True, intellectual life churns on; in the daily press you find literary men all the way up to M. François Mauriac commenting on political affairs: the trouble is that their words have a secondhand ring. Even the endless and scintillating argumentation of M. Sartre in favour of Communism has by now an almost provincial and musty flavour.

Yet how far is it we, the observers, who have changed, and how far does the change lie in France? It is the merit of Herbert Luthy's provocative book on France* that he constantly returns to this question. Mr. Luthy brings many assets to this task. He is a Swiss scholar living in Paris, a noted historian of 17th century France, a gifted polemical journalist, and plainly head over heels in love with his subject. We are also told by the book-jacket that he is the son of a Protestant missionary, and the fervour with which, in analysing the state of France, he maintains what it ought to be, at times suggests the paternal profession. Although he has called his book "A contemporary study," it is really more a collection of penetrating essays on such subjects as French government, foreign and colonial policy, economics and culture, in which the documentation is produced only to sustain a brilliantly argued thesis; and in the end it shows both the advantages and the deficiencies of this method.

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* *The State of France*. By HERBERT LUTHY. Secker and Warburg. 35s.

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THE France of Colbert and Richelieu was the first really centralised modern state in Europe, run by a self-perpetuating horde of officials under an absolute monarchy. In Mr. Luthy's analysis, France is still mortally handicapped by the failure of régime after régime to break the grip of this official caste. Not even the Revolution did so. Mr. Luthy makes much of the point, rightly I think, that the noisy Third Estate of 1789 consisted, not of French capitalists clamouring like their counterparts across the Channel for free enterprise, but in fact predominantly of the *gens de robe*, "lawyers, judges, advocates, notaries, members of courts and councils of every kind, who had been formed and grown great in the monstrous apparatus of justice established under the French monarchy."

The *gens de robe* spun their webs in a state which itself remained designed for the benefit of petty proprietors and the defence of innumerable *situations acquises*, and this crushing past produced the notorious French *immobilisme*. In Mr. Luthy's view, this remains as true as ever. You have the Empire run by an administrative hierarchy almost immune to political change, while governments are transient and the "Homeric struggle in the Parliamentary frogpool" arouses mere derision. The historic battles of the Republic, Left against Right and clerical against anticlerical, have all remained in progress, their issues unsolved. Mr. Luthy illustrates with some relish how this paralysis affects the smallest details of French life. For instance, there is the scandal of the Paris vegetable market, Les Halles: vegetables from remote provinces must pass through this chaotic bottleneck to pass out again at inflated prices, but all attempts to change the system have failed. To have a street paved or a waterpipe laid, a French local council needs the endorsement of six levels of the administration ending with the Finance Ministry in Paris: the process can take a year. In keeping, you have a building industry run practically on a guild system of 200,000 firms with an average labour force of three each (including the employer). Hence, exclaims Mr. Luthy, "in a country whose housing shortage shrieks to high heaven, the building industry suffers from chronic unemployment, with the result that the trade unions are part of the conspiracy."

Recent sins also lie heavily on French colonial policy, of which Mr. Luthy writes scathingly. But he also reminds us that France possessed the oldest and greatest colonial tradition in Europe, and was established in India and on the Mississippi before the British. Even today, faith in the French civilising mission, and the élan contained in the phrase "100 million Frenchmen," are as much of a reality as all the sordidness of French colonial rule. It is interesting to see that, scathing though he is, Mr. Luthy remains on the side of the French mission.

He is particularly sharp in analysing the distorted effect of the past upon the French Left. The Revolution, after all, had its losses as well as gains. It started with the storming of an empty prison and subsequently filled the prisons of the country to bursting. It proclaimed the rights of man and introduced military conscription. It proclaimed the liberation of the peoples and ended with European satellite states ruled and plundered by Paris. Mr. Luthy points out that these contradictions have escaped a French political Left spellbound by history. The French workers may have had enough concrete economic reasons to turn against the shabby bourgeois Republic. Still, French Communism was also greatly helped by the fact that faith in Jacobin Utopianism had remained so unchanged in many French circles that this same abstract faith could easily be transferred to the Kremlin. The same historicism bemused Left intellectuals of the type of Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. Citizens of an old conservative country whose civilisation rested on a refined individualism, they yet felt driven to proclaim a Parisian version of the feverish 19th century class struggle. The adventure ended, as might have been expected, in nightmarish confusion.

I HAVE mentioned only a few of Mr. Luthy's historical insights, which are as startling and illuminating as anything I have read on modern France. The aphoristic essay is a form which obviously lends itself to such a play of swift illumination. But it has its drawbacks, too, which become apparent where Mr. Luthy touches factually on recent politics. Here he comes down to earth and once or twice even rather heavily. For example, on North Africa he suggests the fostering of an Arab cultural élite, presumably in sympathy with France; but he does not say

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how this is to be done against the intransigent hostility of Moslem nationalists. Again, the whole question of EDC and a French lead to Europe, which he discusses a little portentously (with M. Schuman as hero), has already been so transformed by recent events that the argument is partly irrelevant. And, as he himself admits, the French economic recovery of the last two years has been more rapid than he imagined it could be.

This really leads to a fundamental point. Mr. Luthy is particularly impressive when he shows how Frenchmen of every type have been so dazzled by their ideals that they have become ineffective. Yet, when arguing that to overcome her domestic and foreign crisis France must shake off the past and cease to be against herself, he seems to fall a little into the same trap. In a way, this demand for a change in outlook could be put to any country in Europe, or even to the United States. But, violent convulsions apart, countries do not change rapidly. Thus, as France grows older, certain faults may become less prominent while others turn out to be irreparable, the North African empire may even be lost, but she will still be France, just as Britain after the loss of her "civilising mission" in India is still Britain. Indeed, the really quite remarkable recent economic progress in France, which has gone together with similar progress everywhere in Western Europe, goes to show that some of the problems Mr. Luthy discusses may not be so specifically French as he suggests. Still, for what is specifically the French concern, read *The State of France*.

T. R. Fyvel

BAD CONSCIENCE

HOMO REUS, Guilty Man, is one of the more conspicuous synonyms of *homo urbanus*, and we suffer under a whole gamut of shames, from the theological one of having had the bad taste to be descended from apple-stealers, down to such minor matters as having kissed that little girl at the dancing-class, or scribbling "Tush!" on a library-book, or picking one's nose in the bath, or not having kissed that other little girl at that other dancing-class, or being unable to read the works of Mr. William Faulkner. This last failing has been peculiarly painful in a month which has seen the publication of two of this author's books, *A Fable** and *Faulkner's County*.†

A Fable is conceived on a grand scale. Ostensibly it is concerned with an event (that never took place) on the Western Front in spring, 1918: a French regiment refuses to go over the top, and the mutiny spreads at once to enemy and ally. The war comes, not to an end, but a stand-still. This is the surface story: but at the same time the book is largely a rewriting of the events of Passion Week—the mutiny is instigated by a Corporal and his twelve followers, Bible characters appear thinly disguised (as, for example, the sisters Marthe and Marya), the Corporal goes by way of a Gethsemane and Pilate to his own Calvary and eventual resurrection as the Unknown Soldier under the Arc de Triomphe.

This is a theme which in any case only a writer of Mr. Faulkner's stature has the right to tackle. He has not altogether fallen short of the challenge; in conception this is a very good book indeed, perhaps even a great one. What I find infinitely putting-off (and of course I feel guilty about that) is the execution. In the first place the story is told in an innumerable series of flash-backs and flash-forwards and what-have-you, so that, to my mind at least, all time-sense is lacking. This may give a certain universality and stillness, but surely anything that can call itself *A Fable* should begin approximately at the beginning and end approximately at the end?

This is one deterrent to easy reading. Another is that the book presents a very large number and wide variety of characters, and the story deals with them in bewildering

* *A Fable*. By WILLIAM FAULKNER. Chatto and Windus. 15s.

† *Faulkner's County*. By WILLIAM FAULKNER. Chatto and Windus. 15s.

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JONATHAN CAPE

succession. Either of these difficulties alone would be formidable; together they are forbidding indeed—and even yet a determined effort might circumvent them were it not for the third, and far the fiercest, dragon at the gate, the style. *A Fable* is written in a manner that insists that every page, every line, every word is of the immensest significance. This is done largely by picking up in each sentence or phrase a word or two from the sentence or phrase before. Thus:

> Then the sunrise gun crashed from the old citadel above the city; the three flags broke simultaneously from nowhere and climbed the three staffs. What they broke and climbed and peaked in was still dawn, hanging motionless for a moment. But when they streamed on the first morning breeze, they streamed into sunlight, flinging into sunlight the three mutual colours—the red for courage and pride, the white for purity and constancy, the blue for honour and truth. Then the empty boulevard behind the cavalry filled suddenly with sunlight which flung the tall shadows of the men and the horses outward upon the crowd as though the cavalry was charging it.
>
> Only it was the people advancing on the cavalry. . . .

In itself this is perhaps a beautiful passage. The repetitions (three, broke, climbed, streamed, sunlight, cavalry, fling) tend to substitute sound for sense, so that the reader has to make a special effort to concentrate on the matter; at a key moment of a book, this would not necessarily be a bad thing. Three hundred and ninety-two pages of it, however, are quite a different proposition. If all is invested with super-significance then, in the nature of things, much must be falsely so. Long passages are turgid, turbid, and tumid and I (who am perhaps torpid) began to long for the lucid, pellucid, and limpid.

Faulkner's County, subtitled *Tales of Yoknapatawpha County*, is the author's own selection of his tales about the Deep South and consists of one short novel, four long stories, and a number of shorter ones. Most of these date from earlier days before the tail of style started to wag him: far less ambitious than *A Fable*, these tales are more successful; powerful, brilliantly constructed, full of suspense, and radical in treatment. Occasionally they tread dangerously close to the confines of Hot Discomfort Farm, but they avoid quite stepping over them. The Faulkner of *Faulkner's County* is perhaps a

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lesser man, but he seems to me a better writer than the Faulkner of today.

MR. KINGSLEY AMIS, author of *Lucky Jim*, presents no such difficulties. His new book, *That Uncertain Feeling*,* is eminently readable. Readers of *Lucky Jim* will remember that it was farcical, more or less picaresque, fast-moving, hard-hitting, pro-"life" anti-literature, pro-money anti-culture, and so on. *That Uncertain Feeling* is in the same genre but it is no pale shadow, or inflated repetition, of its predecessor. Mr. Amis has avoided the "second novel" pitfalls. Indeed, I think that this new book is, in its rather different way, even better than his first one. In this tale of a Welsh assistant librarian, Mr. Amis plays down the farce (the only slapstick passage in the book is also the only weak one in it); so that, while there are perhaps fewer horse-laughs than in *Lucky Jim*, *That Uncertain Feeling* is an altogether more solid and satisfactory affair. The author has also abandoned the picaresque, and the whole book shows a remarkable advance in consistency and balance.

Perhaps Mr. Amis's forte is his rational analysis of character, his linguistic explorations into the hinterlands of vanity and motive:

> Feeling a tremendous rakehell, and not liking myself much for it, and feeling rather a good chap for not liking myself much for it, and not liking myself at all for feeling rather a good chap, I got indoors, vigorously rubbing lipstick off my mouth with my handkerchief.

This sort of thing can only be done by an artist with extreme respect for language, and accuracy in the use of it. Indeed much of Mr. Amis's concern is with the exact *intonation* of common-place phrases:

> Why did I like women's breasts so much? I was clear on why I liked them, thanks, but why did I like them *so much*?

The writing is, in fact, uniformly brisk and crisp: the pernickety might object to too lavish use of what the Fowlers stigmatise as "pedantic humour," using long words for a laugh (as when, a large brown dog running up to the narrator, he "recommends his immediate departure"); but even this is usually

* *That Uncertain Feeling*. By KINGSLEY AMIS. Gollancz. 12s. 6d.

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so brightly done as to amuse rather than offend.

Mr. Amis satirises a number of deserving to observe the Welsh gaff being blown once objects *en route*, and it is particularly pleasant and for all. This is done partly by parody (as in the delightful snatch of pseudo-Thomas beginning

> *When in time's double morning, meaning death,*
> *Denial's four-eyed bird, that Petrine cock*
> *Crew junction down the sleepers of the breath),*

but principally by close attention to, and observation of, real Welsh talk and manners, as opposed to the bogus Bloody Valley, Lust among the Pit-props, Taffy the Naafi stuff churned out by the professional Celts. Indeed this intruder Saxon writes almost the only accurate transcription of genuine Welsh tone and idiom that I can remember.

Within its limits (the rational and mechanistic) *That Uncertain Feeling* is a tour-de-force; and having said that, I feel freer to turn to the one element in it that I find objectionable. Mr. Amis and his narrator (I do not feel it possible to altogether separate them, especially since *Lucky Jim* presented a narrator of precisely the same type) are conscientiously and unfeelingly anti-art, anti-knowledge, anti-tradition, anti-manners—opposed, in fact, on principle, to "the best that is known or thought" or enjoyed or done. This attitude is entirely negative, and seems to be founded principally on sturdy obtuseness. Hooray for the Philistine values! How screamingly funny to think of anyone enjoying a book about Dr. Johnson! The hero is (as I have said) a librarian, but on the first page we are told

> My gaze, slightly filmed by afternoon drowsiness, swam round the square, high room, fixing idly on the etching, or daguerrotype, or whatever it was, of Lord Beaconsfield's face which hung over the Hobbies and Handicrafts Section:

and I should have thought the inverted intellectual snobbery of (of all persons) a librarian, who cannot distinguish (of all things) an etching from a daguerrotype, excessive. The hero surveys his bookshelf:

> A few Penguins, an Everyman Jane Austen (a College set-book, I should explain). . . .

Of course, of course, no one could *possibly* read Jane Austen for pleasure! The hero surveys the *nouveau riche* in a pub:

> At least this crowd has enough bad taste to drink brandy before "dinner."

There are (believe it or not, Mr. Amis!) other reasons for not drinking brandy before dinner than the desire to conform to the arbitrary code of an *ancien régime*.

This sort of meaningless cock-snooking (and it pervades the book) seems to me brash, provincial in the bad sense, sometimes puritanical in the bad sense. It is a great pity, because Mr. Amis is also thoroughly provincial and puritanical in comparatively good senses. The hasty diagnosis would be acute cultural inferiority complex: but since the context of his books everywhere else belies the occasion for this, I am left wondering.

Two books to be recommended for pure, imaginative writing, and of particular interest for their unusual periods and settings:

Bryher's *Roman Wall** is set in 3rd century Roman Switzerland: the Alemanni are massing on the border, the Empire rots at the centre, and its periphery is falling apart. This twilight period is conjured up with remarkable felicity, and that overworked word "charm" would not be out of place.

Loot and Loyalty,† by Jerzy Pietrkiewicz, deals with matters even more remote to English ears, the Russo-Polish border in the early 17th century. This book is not so much a novel as a pseudo-historical fantasia woven around two historical persons, the Scottish mercenary Captain Tobias Hume (noted for his compositions for viol da gamba), and the peasant pretender to the Russian throne known to historians as "the second false Dmitri." Mr. Pietrkiewicz has none of Bryher's delicate delineation of character, but his material is so wild (and, yes, woolly), and his "attack," in the musical sense, so determined, that he has produced a thoroughly interesting book.

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* *Roman Wall*. By Bryher. Collins. 10s. 6d.

† *Loot and Loyalty*. By Jerzy Pietrkiewicz. Heinemann. 12s. 6d.

Hilary Corke

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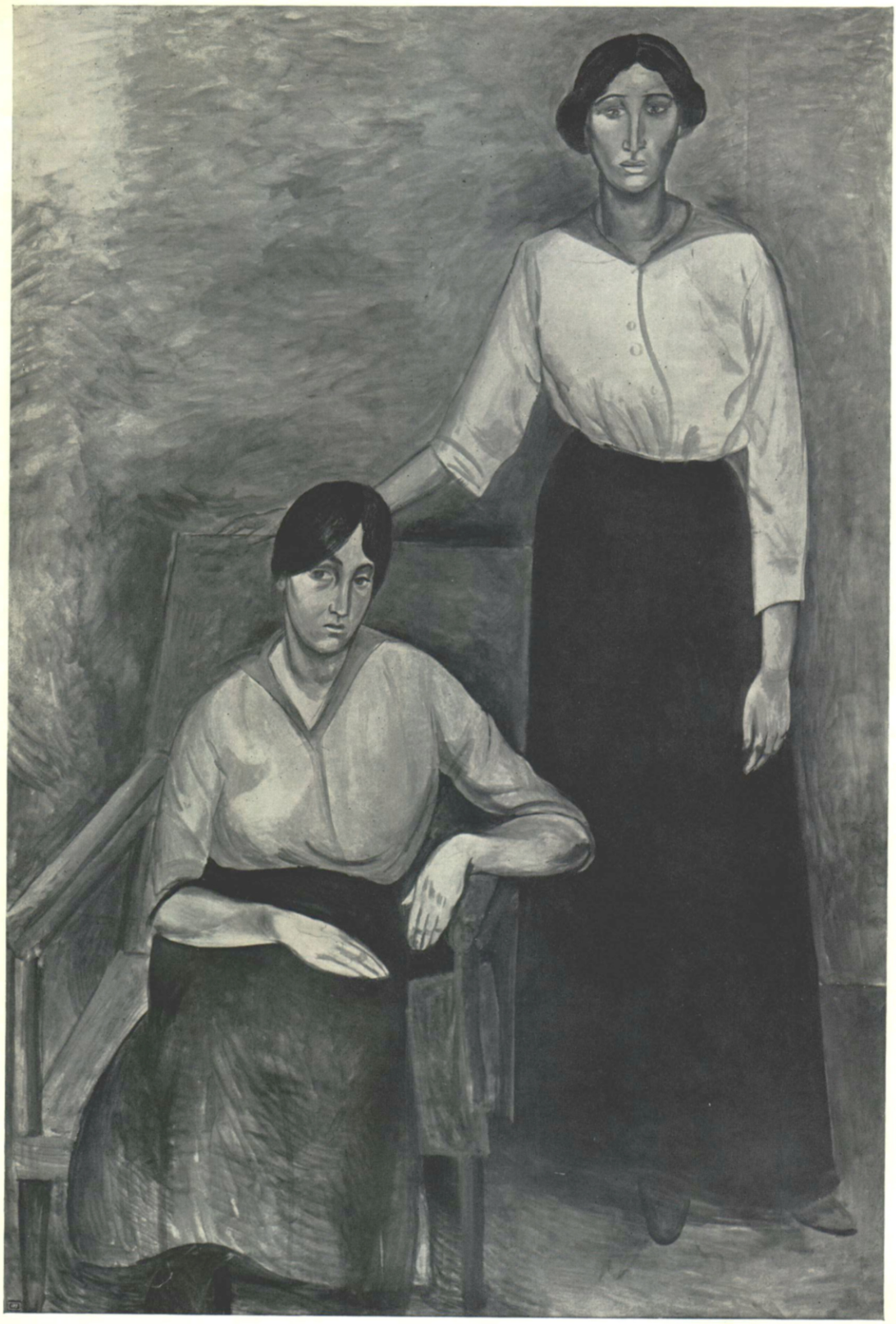

Les deux sœurs, 1914

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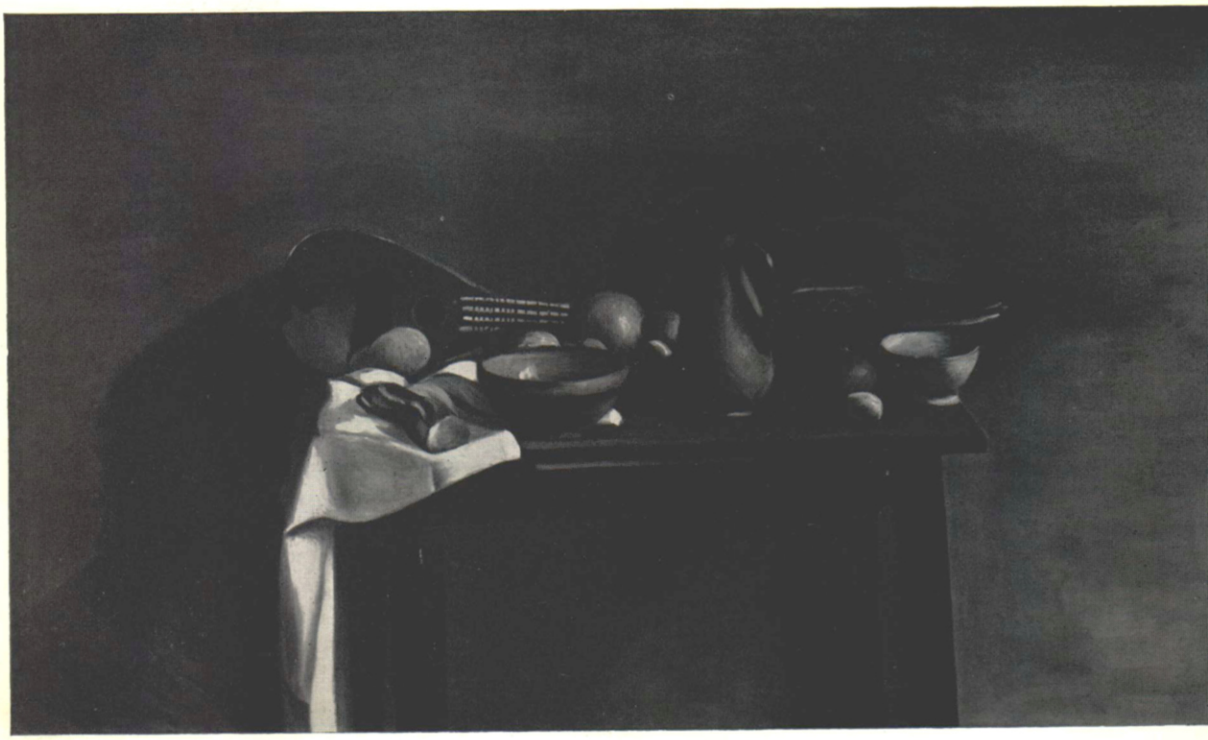

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Les deux pichets, 1942

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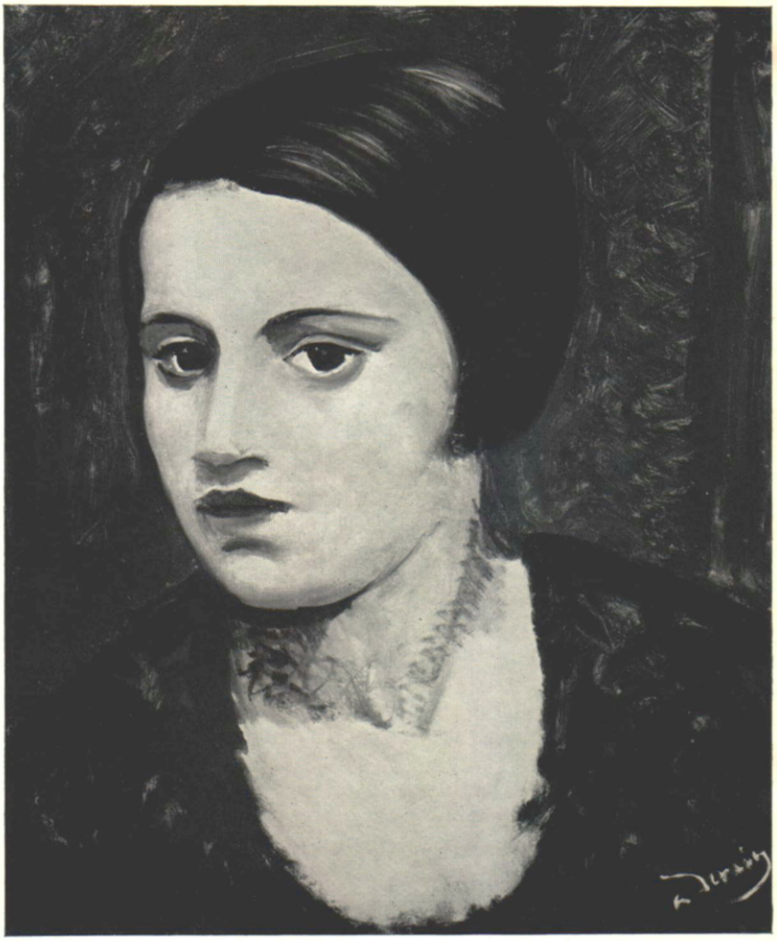

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